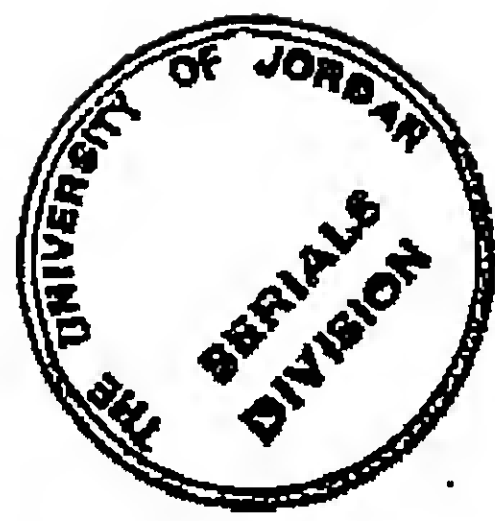


U.S. shies away from live-fire games

EASTERN SAUDI ARABIA (R) — The United States is shying away from live-fire exercises on a big scale in the Gulf because of sensitivities over casualties, defence analysts said Sunday. "I guess they're sensitive to taking casualties during an exercise of this kind. They could have 20 to 30 guys wounded or killed, and Washington is very sensitive on casualties," said independent U.S. military analyst Ken Brower. Up to now, live-fire exercises among U.S. forces assembled in the Gulf have been restricted to small units on weapons ranges, while troops on full-scale manoeuvres have used blanks. Several analysts in Europe and the United States argued that while large-scale training involving live artillery and air strikes could kill, lives would be saved later in actual combat. NATO and Warsaw Pact forces have traditionally carried out combined-arms, live-fire exercises as part of their annual training cycles to coordinate large numbers of men moving rapidly on the modern battlefield.



Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سبيل نشر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الرأي»

Happy New Year

The Jordan Times will not be published on Tuesday, Jan. 1, 1991, due to the New Year holiday on Monday. The next issue of the paper will appear on Wednesday, Jan. 2. The Jordan Times wishes its readers, advertisers and patrons a very happy New Year.

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AMMAN MONDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1990, JUMA'DAH AL THANI 13, 1411

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Brotherhood opposes seasonal celebrations

AMMAN (Petra) — Parliament members of the Muslim Brotherhood have submitted a note to Lower House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat criticising celebrations and parties organised at hotels, clubs and restaurants at Christmas. The deputies considered these celebrations and also advertising for them in the local press as "contradicting the faith of the nation and its dignity and not a proper thing to be done under the present circumstances through which the Arab and Islamic countries are going and contrary to the government's promise to apply the Islamic law in the Kingdom." The deputies demanded that the government immediately ban such celebrations and stop all advertising for them in the local press and the information media.

Arab ministers to meet on Gulf crisis

CAIRO (R) — The foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia will hold their fourth meeting on the Gulf crisis next Friday, an Egyptian Foreign Ministry source said Sunday. The foreign ministers, whose countries are grouped in an anti-Iraq alliance after Baghdad's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait, had postponed a scheduled meeting this month. The Gulf crisis meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Friday follows talks in Cairo Dec. 4.

Iran's first test-tube babies born

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran's first test-tube babies were born in the city of Yazd in central Iran, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported Sunday. The agency said the first baby, a girl, was born to 36-old woman at the city's Afshar Yazd University Hospital Saturday morning. An hour later, another woman gave birth to twins, a girl and a boy. Dr. Abbas Aflatounian, head of the infertility research centre at the hospital, said the births were by caesarean section, and that all three babies and their mothers were in "perfect condition." IRNA reported. Aflatounian said that during the centre's year-long fertilization and insemination programmes, 30 successful pregnancies had been registered.

Bomb threat at U.S. press HQ

RIYADH (AP) — The hotel housing the press centre for the U.S. military command in Saudi Arabia was evacuated late Saturday night after a telephoned bomb threat, a U.S. military spokesman said Sunday. Saudi police who spent about two hours searching the Hyatt Regency Hotel "found nothing," said Michael Gallagher. The threat was the first reported since U.S. forces began deploying in Saudi Arabia Aug. 7. The threat came less than 24 hours before U.S. Vice-President Dan Quayle was scheduled to arrive for a three-day visit to U.S. forces.

Eurodif to pay Iran \$185 million

NICOSIA (AP) — The French consortium Eurodif must pay 940 million francs (\$185 million), to Iran, Tehran Radio reported Sunday. The broadcast, monitored in Nicosia, said Iran's international interests office in Paris disclosed that the French-based uranium enrichment consortium must pay \$480 million francs immediately, and the rest by the end of 1992. From the radio report, it was not clear by what ruling Eurodif was ordered to pay the sum. A French Foreign Ministry spokesman said he was unaware of any such decision. "The order pertains to the dispute which the Islamic Republic of Iran filed against Eurodif," the radio said. The payment is part of a billion dollar loan Iran made to Eurodif in 1974, and which it has been trying to recover since the 1979 revolution.

Cabinet reshuffle said imminent

By Ghadeer Taher
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Several members of the Cabinet have submitted their resignations to Prime Minister Mudar Badran ahead of a government reshuffle, expected as early as Sunday, informed sources said Sunday. One source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Jordan Times that 11 ministers had submitted their resignations "ahead of time to pave the way for the prime minister to reshuffle the cabinet."

The source confirmed that

Badran had reached an agreement with the Muslim Brotherhood for five cabinet posts. It will be the first time the Brotherhood, which has 22 members and at least seven other supporters in the Lower House, would be formally included in a Jordanian cabinet.

The five chosen by the premier were identified as deputies Yusef Al Athem, Abdullah Akaylah and Majed Khalifeh and Brotherhood activists Adnan Al Jalouli and Ibrahim Zeid Al Keilani.

Two prominent leaders of the movement — Isahq Al Farhan

and Ahmad Quteish Al Azyadeh will not be included in the new cabinet because the Muslim Brotherhood wants to retain them in the leadership council. "The Brotherhood does not allow one of its leaders to become a member of the government," said a source.

"I would not attach any significance to the resignations other than that they are routinely submitted by government members whenever they think there is an impending cabinet reshuffle."

(Continued on page 2)

House passes defence law after scaling down government powers

By Abdullah Hasanat
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — After much haggling and obvious dissent in government ranks, the Lower House of Parliament Sunday passed two key bills, the exports and imports law, and the defence law.

While the first law gave the government full authority to control all exports and imports, the second, as amended by the Lower House, curbed the executive branch's powers to impose emergency laws on the country. In two key articles, the government's right to invoke the defence law and to compensate those affected by its application was curtailed. The House passed an

amendment to the law that gives Parliament the authority to revoke the law within 15 days of its application.

The defence law, according to legal experts, is a statute law that only becomes active in cases prescribed in the law itself and when the country is subject to external threat or internal strife.

The amendment to article 2 of the law sparked a prolonged debate on the constitutionality of sub-article (c) proposed by the House Legal Committee.

Members of the National Bloc attempted to repeal the amendment, but the Legal Committee's chairman, Mr. Hussein Mujalli, forcefully defended the proposed amendment.

The prime minister, Mr. Mudar Badran, also questioned the amendment's constitutionality since in article 124 of the basic law there was no mention of parliamentary control.

Abdullah Zureikat, of the National Bloc proposed that the article be put to the Higher Council for Constitutional Interpretation, but his motion was not seconded.

The second point of contention in the law was article 9, which, as proposed by the government, authorises the prime minister to compensate those who suffer damage through the application of the law. The Legal Committee proposed that any sufferer could go to court

(Continued on page 2)

Baghdad still awaiting 'constructive' proposals

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein said Sunday that he had yet to receive any "effective and constructive" proposals to resolve the Gulf crisis, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported. "Iraq has and still considers that a solution to the Palestinian cause is the key to resolving the region's problems in a comprehensive manner," he was quoted as telling Yugoslav Foreign Minister Budimir Loncar at a

meeting in Baghdad.

Loncar is visiting Baghdad on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement in an 11th-hour bid to avert a Gulf war. The United Nations Security Council has ordered Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait by Jan. 15 or face force.

Saddam said the key to a settlement was his Aug. 12 "initiative" which links setting up a Palestinian state and discussions on the Gulf crisis.

"Iraq has not received any

effective and constructive proposals from the international parties towards a peaceful settlement of the region's problems," INA quoted him as saying.

A meeting between U.S. President George Bush and Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz was cancelled earlier this month after Baghdad fixed Jan. 12 for a visit to Baghdad by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker.

(Continued on page 2)

Saddam assails Bush and Fahd in New Year message

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein attacked U.S. President George Bush and Saudi King Fahd on Sunday in a tough 20-minute New Year message which did not once mention Kuwait.

In a televised broadcast, Saddam said good and evil were battling for supremacy in the world.

"...In this confrontation those who betrayed the teachings of Jesus Christ... have been trapped by the devil... may God

curse them all," he said.

He said Bush betrayed the teachings of Christ in the same way that Judas betrayed Jesus.

Saudi King Fahd, custodian of Islam's two holiest shrines, should be called "the traitor of the two holy mosques" for letting foreign troops into the kingdom, Saddam said.

The New Year message linked the "renegades and hypocrites (who) betrayed Islam" to the Saudi king, whose country hosts most of the half-million strong

multinational force assembled against Iraq.

The Iraqi leader cited the Israeli-occupied territories, the Golan Heights and Lebanon as regions where "security and peace remain today outside the reach of many people."

Saddam said that as the world celebrated the advent of a new year many were dying from malnutrition while grain was dumped in the sea to protect

(Continued on page 2)

Iraq has built oil pipeline, trenches around Kuwait

AMMAN (R) — Iraq has built an oil pipeline and dug huge trenches in Kuwait along the Gulf coast and near the Saudi border in a bid to erect a wall of fire around the emirate in case of war, travellers from Kuwait said Sunday.

A resident of Kuwait with extensive contacts there said a highly placed Kuwaiti oil industry official had said that Iraq had built a pipeline along the coast from the Ahmadi oil installation to Khafji, near the Saudi border.

Another traveller with access to military zones had seen a similar pipeline running along a trench, five metres wide and five metres deep, along the border with Saudi Arabia, he said.

The pipeline, with valves at regular intervals, carried crude oil from the Ahmadi oil installation, about 30 kilometres from Kuwait City, and was intended to discharge oil which could be set alight in case of war, the sources said.

U.S.-dominated forces in the Gulf are gearing up for possible war against Baghdad if its troops do not leave Kuwait by the Jan. 15 deadline set by the U.N. Security Council.

The oil sources said only two small oil fields were operating in Kuwait. Ahmadi, the only operating refinery, had been producing about 80,000 barrels a day, enough for Kuwait's internal needs, before a decision by Iraq last week to increase daily production to about 200,000 barrels.

The sources said Iraq had placed landmines in oil fields and along the newly built pipeline. The Kuwaiti resident told

Reuters that he had seen buried tanks, huge gun nests and barbed wire barriers along the coast built up over the past month. Iraq had taken over and reinforced villas at strategic sites in Kuwait to use as military sites.

"They've taken some mansions that overlook highways and covered them up with mortar and bricks," he said.

Iraq has abolished the Kuwait Petroleum Company, the parent company of Kuwait's state-owned oil marketing, but retained the Kuwait Oil Company, which is now directed by the Iraqi oil minister.

It also abolished the Kuwait Petrochemical Industries Company and shut down its fertiliser plants but is running a salt and chlorine plant at full capacity, the sources said.



The Upper House of Parliament in session Sunday (Petra photo)



Senate approves budget for 1991

AMMAN (Petra) — The Upper House of Parliament (Senate) Sunday endorsed the state budget for the year 1991 at a meeting, chaired by Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi and attended by Prime Minister Mudar Badran and cabinet ministers.

The Senate's financial committee member Hamd Al Farhan read out the committee's report on behalf of the committee's rapporteur, Khalil Al Salem.

The report paid tribute to the Finance Committee of the Lower House for its comments on revenue estimates and expenditure and recommendations. It also praised the government for its efforts in preparing a precise and objective budget, "which can serve as a working paper

to deal with the crisis Jordan is currently passing through."

The report outlined the enormous losses the Jordanian economy has incurred as a result of the observance of the United Nations Security Council resolution imposing sanctions on Iraq.

The report voiced satisfaction with the government's performance and achievements during the year 1990, and noted in particular the achievements during the first part of the year, saying that such achievements had exceeded the target goals.

These achievements included a cut in expenditure, increase in revenues, application of austerity measures, rationalisation of consumption and expansion in basic services such as

education, health and social welfare in addition to the introduction of a new agricultural policy aimed at boosting agricultural production.

The Senate voiced concern over the government's indebtedness, saying that it has exceeded the internationally-recognised safety limits. It also expressed concern about the steep decline in the gross domestic product (GDP) caused by the Gulf crisis.

The report noted with concern the high inflation rate of 10 per cent, and called for making every possible effort to reduce it.

The report called for investigation into the Petra Bank affair which has caused the public sector a loss of JD 250 million.

The report also called for correcting what it termed as a great imbalance in the financial organisation and noted that there are excesses and violations of the financial and monetary laws in force.

The report criticised the budget speech of the finance minister for failing to address the issue of poverty and called for providing information and figures to the legislative and executive powers on poverty, unemployment, drought and scarcity of water.

The report recommended that the Upper House approach the government to provide JD 500,000 to educational development, and to allocate

(Continued on page 2)

Mashat welcomes EC move

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Iraq welcomes the European Community (EC) initiative to explore means to resolve the Gulf crisis peacefully, but such an initiative would succeed only if the Europeans adopted an independent approach to the problem, a senior Iraqi diplomat said Sunday.

Mohammad Sadeq Al Mashat, Iraq's ambassador to the United States, also said that the only way out of the "dilemma" over American-Iraqi contacts was for Washington to accept the "principle that each country sets its own dates for the meeting."

Asked whether the bickering over date for a visit to Baghdad by American Secretary of State James Baker would be settled and the meeting would take place, the ambassador said:

"It all depends on the Americans. We are open, we are flexible, we are ready to take the road to peace. (unlike) the Americans who say something and block it immediately. They are the ones who blocked dialogue and negotiations, not us."

Mashat, speaking to reporters at Amman airport upon his arrival from Baghdad after 10 days of consultations with President Saddam Hussein and 15 other Iraqi envoys from around the world, said despite "intimidations and heaps of threats" Iraq had proved that it "would not succumb and abandon its principles and rejection of double standards."

Mashat said that Iraqi welcomed efforts from "all sincere mediation efforts from countries and individuals" to resolve the Gulf crisis, sparked by the Aug. 2 Iraqi invasion and subsequent annexation of Kuwait.

"It is high time for the Europeans to enunciate their own policy and not be subservient to the American policy," he said in response to a question on a meeting of the EC foreign ministers on Friday to discuss the Gulf crisis. "We hope that the Europeans would see where their interests are, that their interests are not linked to the American new imperialistic design after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from the international scene."

We welcome any independent effort on the European part," he added.

Mashat, who flew into Amman accompanied by the Iraqi ambassadors to China, Japan and Canada on their way to their embassies, said Iraq remained "open... flexible and receptive to serious, in-depth dialogue and negotiations over all problems of the Middle East."

The ambassador reaffirmed the Iraqi position that Baghdad "will not respect any Security Council resolution as long as the dozens of other Security Council resolutions on the Middle East and the Palestinian problem remain shelved."

"We will never accept the double standards of the United States, which heaps threats and intimidation on

(Continued on page 2)

Violence rages in occupied lands, dozens wounded

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Large-scale violence continued in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and dozens of Palestinians were reportedly shot and wounded by Israeli soldiers.

Curfews kept some 250,000 Palestinians indoors throughout the Gaza Strip.

Israel imposed the curfews to prevent violence after clashes with soldiers in the Gaza Strip Saturday left four Palestinians dead and 90 wounded, according to the military command.

In the West Bank town of Yaabad, three Palestinian

known as collaborators with Israel opened fire on the Arab activists stoning them and killed Rabiya Hamaresh, 26, Arab and media reports said.

Many collaborators receive arms from Israel for protection.

In the West Bank city of Nablus, a Palestinian was killed by an explosive near the military headquarters, but the circumstances were unclear, Arab reports said.

In two Gaza City districts, troops shot and wounded 11 protesters in the limbs with live ammunition and another seven with rubber bullets, reports said.

The army command confirmed that an Arab was killed by a fellow Palestinian in Yaabad and confirmed one Palestinian dead in unknown circumstances in Nablus.

In Rafah, where Saturday's violence initiated, stone covered streets were deserted except for army patrols and one burning tyre.

One little boy waved a victory "V" sign at reporters and photographers from behind the grill of his window.

(Continued on page 2)

EC to hold emergency talks on Gulf Friday

PARIS (Agencies) — European Community (EC) foreign ministers will hold emergency talks on the Gulf crisis next Friday, only 11 days before the U.N. deadline for Iraq to leave Kuwait.

A French Foreign Ministry spokesman could not say whether a new diplomatic drive would be discussed, but diplomatic sources in Bonn said the meeting in Luxembourg was expected to reaffirm European solidarity with Washington.

"That is the signal we should expect," he said.

"We want to look at the current situation in the Gulf again in view of the Jan. 15 deadline and because we haven't discussed the subject on a ministerial level for three weeks due to the holidays," another diplomatic source said.

However other diplomats in

Europe said some countries were concerned at the failure of attempts to open talks between the United States and Iraq.

"In such a very difficult phase it is necessary to give diplomacy its chance in the search for peaceful solutions," German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher said in a radio interview.

A day earlier, Genscher proposed the emergency meeting of his EC colleagues to discuss the tense Gulf situation. Britain on Sunday welcomed the proposal.

Genscher demanded that Iraq abide by U.N. Security Council resolutions ordering Iraqi troops to leave Kuwait by Jan. 15. International sanctions have been imposed on Iraq to try to force its departure.

(Continued on page 2)

Iraq warns of Arab, Muslim anti-U.S. attacks

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — The Iraqi ruling party said Sunday that all of Washington's vital interests around the world would be targets for guerrilla attacks if the United States launched a war to drive Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

The Iraqi leadership said Saturday its troops would not leave Kuwait before or after the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline for a withdrawal from the emirate under the threat of an attack by U.S.-dominated multinational forces in the Gulf.

"We tell the U.S. administration, which is saying that the confrontation will be limited within the (Gulf) battlefield, that all its vital interests all over the globe will be military targets for Muslim guerrilla attacks," the ruling Baath Party newspaper Al Thawra said in an editorial.

It said that hundreds of

thousands of Muslim believers were prepared to direct powerful, painful blows to the multinational forces.

"It will be among the first duties of Arab and Muslim holy fighters, who are eagerly waiting for the beginning of the confrontation, to open the fire of their anger towards the forces of tyranny who want to impose their evil to stop their march."

Sunday, Navef Hawatme, leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, said in a new year statement the Palestinian people will fight with the multinational force and Israel.

"We will deal intensive blows to the enemy forces to confuse its movements... all the fleets, fighter planes and sophisticated weapons will not affect the desire of the peoples of this area for freedom, independence and control of its wealth," he said.

Algerian hijack ends

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Two alleged army deserters surrendered peacefully Sunday after hijacking a domestic jetliner and holding 88 people hostage during two-day standoff on an airport runway. Algerian officials reported.

The pair handed their firearms over to police shortly after dawn following 30 hours of dogged negotiations with Algerian authorities in the eastern city of Annaba, the official APS news agency said.

The deserters had demanded fuel to fly to a foreign country, possibly Egypt or Libya, but their motives remained unknown Sunday.

Their surrender meant the liberation of the pilot and copilot, the last hostages on the Air Algerie Boeing 737. They had earlier released 44 hostages held overnight in the aircraft, and 36 others during negotiations Saturday with Interior Minister Mohammad Saleh Mohammad.

APS identified the pair as deserters from the Saharan town of Ghardaia. They were whisked away in a police car to a undisclosed location.

Their names, ages and other details were not revealed, and their motivation remained a mystery even to their captives.

But there was also speculation they were Muslim militants trying to draw attention to the plight of fellow believers facing a crackdown in neighbouring Tunisia.

One of the 36 passengers released before the hijack ended said the gunmen had told the pilot to fly to Tunis but had to land at Annaba, 60 kilometres from the border, because the Tunisian authorities would not accept the plane.

A French woman passenger said one of the hijackers was armed with a pistol and the other carried a knife. "They behaved like in a bad movie," Benetto Titi told French radio.

Germans said to have played key role in Iraq's nuclear effort

BONN (AP) — As world leaders debate the nuclear potential of Iraq's might, the list of German companies alleged to have helped advance Iraq's atomic technology grows.

At least 100 German firms are suspected of helping Iraq develop its unconventional weapons capability, sources say. German officials won't say how many of those are being investigated for suspected nuclear technology exports.

The news magazine Der Spiegel, in the latest of a series of allegations, said this week that "several dozen" European companies were implicated and listed six German firms with some reported connection to Iraq's weapons programme.

"I would not like to be George Bush and going to bed tonight" with the uncertainty over whether Iraq has a nuclear bomb, said Kenneth Timmerman, editor of the Paris-based Middle East Defence News.

It quoted a source who attended a secret briefing on the report as saying Economics Minister Helmut Haussmann "told us that centrifuge equipment sent to Iraq was of German origin."

Additionally, officials have confirmed that customs officers last summer intercepted a German shipment of centrifuge parts at Frankfurt airport bound for Iraq.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reviewed Iraq's declared nuclear facilities and stores in November, under terms of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, of which Iraq is one of the 141 signatories, and said it found nothing unexpected.

Stemmler, one of the two for-

mer man employees who both have denied wrongdoing, says he was unjustly fired in 1989. But he is reportedly suspected by the government of playing "an important role" in Iraq's centrifuge technology, according to this week's issue of Nuclearfuel.

He said Thursday he had not been contacted by German authorities. The government refuses to comment on cases under investigation.

So far, only one arrest has been reported in the nuclear arms scandal, but the director of a Bonn-based weapons supplier was not charged and remains under investigation for alleged export violations, officials say.

Firms in other countries, including the United States, Britain, Switzerland and Brazil, have been named in connection with suspected Iraqi nuclear development.

But as allegations mount against German firms, so does frustration in Washington.

"We know what the Germans are up to," said a U.S. Senate source, who spoke on condition he not be further identified. "There is only an argument over how long it takes before (Iraq) gets the bomb."

German officials deny they are being lax. But one source in Bonn's inner circle added: "Have you seen the harbour in Hamburg, you just can't control every container."

Germany's federal justice system also makes it difficult to halt violations, despite tough new export laws.

Drafted by the Economics Ministry, laws are enforced through the finance ministry's customs police, who after investigating reports of possible wrongdoing can turn the case

over to local authorities for further investigation and potential charges.

Lutz Stavenhagen, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's top intelligence adviser, has suggested allowing the country's counterintelligence unit to investigate suspected export violations. But the proposal is likely to meet with strong resistance in a country that remembers Hitler's police state.

The latest allegations of German nuclear help to Iraq follows last week's announcement that the United States gave Germany a list of 50 companies suspected of breaking the international embargo against Iraq.

A government official said Friday that of 87 companies under review, based on information from the United States and Britain, 16 had been cleared and 10 were being further investigated for allegedly preparing to break the embargo. The other cases are pending.

Spiegel and the specialised McGraw-Hill publication, Nuclearfuel, both alleged this week that German firms, and individual engineers, are suspected of supplying Iraq with sophisticated technology and know-how to help in building centrifuges to make weapons-grade uranium.

The companies and individuals named in the reports deny any wrongdoing.

It is not clear how far along Iraq may be towards making a nuclear bomb.

The British newspaper, The Sunday Times, reported earlier this month Iraq might be only a year away from the goal.

But a major source for its report, German engineer Bruno Stemmler, denied the paper's timeframe in an interview Thursday night.

Stemmler, one of the two for-

Italian astrologers predict no Gulf war

MILAN (AP) — Economic crises will supplant the Gulf as the biggest global concerns of 1991, Italian clairvoyants said this week as they made their traditional predictions for the new year.

Most of the clairvoyants predicted that not a single shot will be fired over the Gulf crisis.

However, Bernardo Gandolfo, a Neapolitan clairvoyant, said the two protagonists of the Gulf crisis, George Bush and Saddam Hussein, may be faced with assassination attempts.

Lucia Alberti, a respected Austrian-born Italian astrologer who prints a yearly "calendar of events," claimed that industrial recession and unemployment will be the major evils in most countries during 1991.

"Europe will have to defend itself from an invasion of foreign workers and foreign investments and may have temptations of isolationism," Alberti wrote.

Poland, Sweden and Romania

will be especially affected by economic problems, she said.

Japan will be a happy island in the otherwise gloomy international situation and Alberti said the Asian giant will continue its sensational economic expansion.

Giancarlo Giacomini, of Cagliari, said 1991 will be marked by coup attempts in several countries and that the Soviet Union will face serious internal turmoil and a crisis with neighbouring countries.

Most clairvoyants predicted that Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev will stay in charge, resisting opposition pressure.

Natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods here predicted in Japan, the United States and Italy.

Genaro Brianti warned that Mount Vesuvius, a long-dormant volcano near Naples, would suddenly wake up.

"Neapolitans should keep their pants and shoes near their beds," Brianti said.

Italian TV squelches interview with Saddam

ROME (AP) — Italy's state-owned television decided Friday not to broadcast an interview it did with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, saying it might "disturb the efforts" for a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis.

The unusual decision raised a storm of protests from reporters. The journalist who conducted the interview, Bruno Vespa, threatened to resign.

The director-general of RAI television, Gianni Pasquarelli, announced the decision in a letter to Vespa, the highly regarded director of the nightly TG-1 news broadcast.

"Italy is president of the European Community and we must avoid, in a moment of extreme delicacy, any act that could contribute to disturb the efforts that are being made to find a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis," said the letter, read on the evening broadcast.

Pasquarelli did not say how the interview might have disturbed peace-making attempts.

Vespa told viewers of Friday night's TG-1 programme that he disagreed with the decision to postpone the broadcast indefinitely.

The Iraqi leader has given

numerous interviews to Western television stations since his country invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2.

A RAI spokesman said he did not know if the Italian government had asked the network to hold off broadcasting the interview.

The Italian government funds RAI and political parties have broad influence in its operations.

On Friday night's programme, Vespa told viewers: "I expressed to the director-general my surprise and my complete dissent with the initiative."

An announcer added that Vespa had asked Pasquarelli for a meeting next week to "evaluate if the situation is compatible with his (Vespa's) remaining at the head of the biggest Italian journalistic outlet."

Vespa said that during the one-hour, 10-minute interview conducted several days ago, Saddam had harshly criticised the United States and seemed to rule out negotiations.

He added that Saddam had "implicitly admitted" he would use chemical weapons in a war.

The editorial committee of the RAI said it supported Vespa in the dispute.

Iran paper: Rushdie tour will expedite his execution

NICOSIA (R) — A radical Iranian newspaper said Saturday it hoped British author Salman Rushdie would visit Muslim countries because it would make it easier to kill him.

Jomburi Eslami also called on Britain to stop protecting Rushdie so that he can be put to death under the edict of the late Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini for blaspheming Islam in his novel "The Satanic Verses."

Iran has said the February 1989 death order stands despite a decision by Rushdie, 43, last Monday to renew his Islamic faith. The author also promised not to go ahead with a paperback edition of the book.

"Rushdie must know that his new manoeuvres will lead him nowhere and his only alternative is to submit to the divine rule," the Iranian news agency IRNA quoted the daily as saying in an editorial.

It welcomed a proposal that Rushdie travel to Muslim states, saying such a tour "will expedite his execution."

Egyptian Secretary of State

for Religious Affairs Mohammad Ali Mahjoub, who played a part in drafting Rushdie's statement Monday, said the author wanted to travel to Egypt's Al Azhar Mosque "to declare repentance."

The mosque is the world's oldest seat of Islamic learning. Rushdie, born in India to a Muslim family, has been in hiding under British police guard for 22 months.

"By ending its protection of the apostate author Britain can make up for its treacheries against Islam," IRNA quoted the editorial as saying.

Rushdie defended himself Friday by radio directly to the Iranian people over Iran's death order against him.

The Persian language service of the British Broadcasting Corporation transmitted an interview Friday with Rushdie, in which he said his book "is about how a man is destroyed by losing God."

Rushdie added: "That seems to me to be a perfectly moral

Americans focused more on Gulf crisis in 1990

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans paid more attention to the Gulf crisis than to any other news story in 1990 — a year in which domestic news reports were dominated by international events, a survey shows.

Two-thirds of the public closely followed stories about the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the deployment of U.S. forces in the region over the last five months, according to the survey by the Times Mirror Centre for the People and the Press.

But Americans showed little interest in the historic fall of communism in almost all of Eastern Europe and the economic and political turmoil in the Soviet Union. The survey said that a no point did more than 30 per cent of Americans closely follow these events.

The Middle East events also figured in the most closely followed domestic news story of the year. Sixty-two per cent of those surveyed said they regularly read stories about soaring gasoline prices in August and September.

By comparison, reports in November about the declining economy attracted only 39 per cent of the readers on a regular basis. Stories leading up to and including the November general election caught the regular attention of only 38 per cent, as did stories last January about the war against drugs.

Only one other news event, also involving U.S. soldiers fighting abroad, caught the close attention of more than a majority of Americans: Sixty per cent of Americans regularly read stories about the U.S. invasion of Panama. Although U.S. troops invaded Panama in December 1989, their presence in the country and numerous news stories continued into 1990.

According to the survey, the Times Mirror news interest index, public interest in some issues shifted significantly during the year.

Last spring, only 18 per cent of the public paid close attention to stories about the first signs of economic problems. By September that percentage had increased to 29 per cent and in November it was 39 per cent.

There was only scant attention to the nation's budget deficit last spring when Representative Dan Rostenkowski proposed a deficit reduction plan. During the summer as Congress debated a budget package 18 per cent of the readers were following the issue closely with public attention increasing to 31 per cent by the fall amid threats to shut down the federal government.

Interest in news concerning President George Bush also fluctuated widely.

When Bush attended the drug summit in Columbia last February, only 22 per cent of the public paid close attention to news stories about the visit. Criticism of the president on his changing position on taxes and his Gulf policy caught the close attention of slightly less than a third of the public.

By contrast, three out of four people read last March about Bush's distaste for broccoli.

Ailing Swedish woman airlifted from 'peace ship'

BAHRAIN (AP) — A 56-year-old Swedish woman, one of several Western peace activists aboard an Iraqi ship intercepted in the Arabian Sea Wednesday, has been airlifted by a U.S. navy helicopter to a Gulf hospital, a U.S. spokesman reported Saturday.

The Iraqi master of the 11,333-tonne Ben Khaldoun radioed for help around midnight Thursday, the spokesman said.

The woman was reported to be suffering "chest pains and gastrointestinal distress" and a medical officer from the amphibious transport dock USS Trenton was sent aboard to check her, the spokesman said.

Later, a helicopter from the assault carrier two Jima flew the unidentified woman to the warship for further checks.

She was transferred to a shore hospital Friday, the spokesman said, without disclosing which medical centre. Her current condition was not immediately known.

The Ben Khaldoun was stopped Wednesday by Western warships in the northern Arabian Sea outside the Strait of

Hormuz, gateway to the Gulf. They were enforcing the United Nations economic embargo on Iraq.

Boarding parties found the ship, which was heading for Iraq's southern port of Ummi Qasr, was carrying 800 tonnes of sugar as well as cooking oil and rice, all banned under the embargo.

The Ben Khaldoun was also carrying scores of peace activists from Arab, Asian and Western countries who were heading for Iraq in a demonstration of support for President Saddam Hussein.

Iraq's media said the activists included American, Japanese, Chinese and European peace campaigners.

The women tried to resist the boarding teams. U.S. officials said there were no injuries in the scuffles.

But the Iraqi media said the Western sailors beat the passengers with clubs and rifle butts, causing some injuries.

The U.S. navy said there were 161 women, 66 men and 14 children on the ship, including the 42-man crew, when it was boarded.

'Foreigners' blamed for Mogadishu shootings

MOGADISHU (R) — The Somali government blamed foreigners for violence in the capital, Mogadishu, as shooting continued in parts of the city Saturday.

No official figures were released on casualties in fighting between security forces and armed gangs over the past few days, but hospital sources said the number of people wounded in clashes on Thursday and Friday could run to several hundred.

Witnesses said dozens were killed Friday in heavy fighting between government troops and armed men who attacked a fuel depot in a northern suburb.

An article in the weekend edition of the government-owned newspaper Kaddiga Oktoober (October Star) said hundreds of foreigners claiming refugee status had infiltrated Mogadishu aiming to destabilise the country.

It said immigration authorities

should start screening alien Africans in Somalia to "weed out those sinister elements who have been committing un-Islamic and un-Somali acts of rape, robbery with violence, and arson."

The paper did not name countries, but it appeared to be referring to Ogadeni and Oromo people from neighbouring Ethiopia, of whom tens of thousands fled across the border during the 1977-78 war between Ethiopia and Somalia.

There has been an upsurge of violence in Mogadishu in recent weeks, with several rebel groups intensifying their fight to overthrow President Mohammad Siad Barre, who has ruled since 1969.

Gangs of criminals have taken advantage of the turmoil.

Western embassies and most foreign aid organisations evacuated non-essential staff earlier this month because of the violence and general instability.

Lloyd's reports sighting mines off Saudi coast

BAHRAIN (AP) — A navigation warning has been issued advising "extreme caution" in the vicinity of an oil field off Saudi Arabia's northern Gulf coast, the London-based Lloyd's shipping intelligence unit reported Friday.

Lloyd's, which monitors maritime traffic around the world, said two mines were found drifting in the vicinity of the Zuluf field on Dec. 23 and Dec. 26.

Both mines were "destroyed," according to the report.

"A navigation warning... advises mariners to exercise extreme caution in the vicinity of the Al Zuluf oil field due to the probable presence of mines," the Lloyd's statement said. It said the warning was issued Thursday afternoon.

The U.S.-led multinational naval force deployed in the standoff with Iraq is equipped with counter-mine measures, including three state-of-the-art minesweepers from Britain.

Zuluf is about 80 kilometres southeast of Khafji, Saudi Arabia's northernmost border point, and some 65 kilometres east of Ras Al Khafji oil terminal.

There was no immediate comment from the foreign navies whose warships are monitoring the Gulf.

Shipping executives in the region said they had heard of a shipping caution note for that area, but not that mines had been located and destroyed.

Since the Gulf crisis erupted, there has been one mine scare in the central parts of the waterway, where there is a narrow shipping lane at Shah Ollam shoals northeast of Qatar. Closer checks by American and British warships proved it was a false alarm.

The Americans had set off the caution note in that area when they sighted an Iraqi ship in what they considered suspicious movement.

The executives, who spoke on condition they not be named, also pointed out that shipping traffic in the northern part of the Gulf off the Saudi coast would be limited to mainly American, and possibly other Western warships.

Few tankers and supply vessels sail to the Khafji oil terminal where a Japanese company is operating the Kuwait-Saudi oil field in a so-called neutral zone between the two countries.

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NEW YEAR'S ECONOMIC PULSE

By Dr. Fahed Faweh

An outlook for 1991

TONIGHT is a turning point, separating not only two years, but also two decades. The following days or weeks will answer the frequently asked question: War or peace? At this critical point, it is extremely difficult to predict the future as the situation is still wide-open to all possibilities.

In forecasting the political, economic and social situation in Jordan, during the coming year, one has to start with the assumptions. The future is not strictly determined in advance, it is a range of probabilities and scenarios. The key probabilities in our case are: Peace, war and status quo.

It goes without saying that war will bring with it the worst scenario for Jordan, and that the peaceful solution will result in the best scenario, while it is normal to make forecasts based on the continuation of the status quo.

If war were to break out any time during the next couple of weeks or months, the immediate results for Jordan would be devastating: A possible Israeli aggression, a mass transfer of Palestinians from the West Bank, an influx of evacuees from Iraq and Kuwait, and the disruption of oil supply.

If peace prevails, based on a middle of the road solution, Jordan will be a winner, and so will emerge all parties to the dispute. The new Arab order will be much better to Jordan in that it will include the principle of pan-Arab national security, fair distribution of wealth and responsibilities, and a form of Arab confederation.

All-out-war and out-right-peace are unlikely to happen. At least it does not make sense to make our projections based on either. It is of course wiser for the country to assume the worst. In order to safeguard peace we have to be ready for war. However, I

shall make my projections assuming the continued tension, and preparedness but not the full scale war.

Taking the last five months as a guide for the future, it is reasonable to expect a negative growth in the gross domestic product by 10 per cent, a stability in the volume of imports because lower standard of living will be offset by 10 per cent increase in population, a decline in exports by 15 per cent. Arab aid will be around zero, and foreign aid to the order of \$250 million, foreign exchange reserves of the Central Bank of Jordan may decline slowly but will remain within safe limits. The exchange rate will hold all through 1991, the deficit in the budget will be around the plan, the inflation rate will be to the order of 10 per cent, and so will be the decline in the standard of living, expatriate remittances will range around \$500 million, and unemployment rate may rise to reach 25 per cent. The major losing sectors will be tourism and transport, the minor losers will be industry and agriculture. The results will be mixed for the financial and real estate sectors as well as for various services.

It is true that the Gulf crisis caused huge losses to the Jordanian economy, but it did not deal a death blow. The Iraqi oil is saving Jordan some \$400 million a year, and the suspension of debt service is easing pressure on the countries reduced foreign exchange earnings.

All in all, the Jordanian economy will survive, and the changing circumstances may give rise to many opportunities for those who can see the positive side of any bad situation and try to make the best of it.

Happy and peaceful new year.

Ministers reply to queries on power, supply and education

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Lower House of Parliament held a session Sunday during which the government replied to a number of questions put forward by some deputies.

During Sunday's session, which was attended by Prime Minister Mudar Badran and the Cabinet ministers, the parliament's secretary general read out the government's replies on queries related to ministries of energy and mineral resources, supply, education.

In reply to a query by Deputy Abdullah Al Nsour on electrification of two villages in South Shouneh, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Thabet Al Taher said his ministry has sent a letter to the Prime Ministry about electrification of villages and residential areas throughout Jordan, in accordance with priorities and availability of funds.

Answering a query by Deputy Fuad Khalfat on imports of frozen chicken, Supply Minister Ibrahim Ayyoub said the local production of chicken was not enough to local needs, particularly in winter. Therefore the ministry imports frozen chicken to cover the shortage in the local markets, he said.

Education Minister M'sammad Hamdan said in reply to a question about the cost-effectiveness of the ministry's housing fund that it aims at granting subscribers loans for

housing purposes. He said a total of 740 beneficiaries had benefited from the fund until the end of this year and the total loans granted amounted to JD 8.4 million.

The fund grants loans for buying houses or building houses and the loans are payable on monthly installments over a period of up to 20 years.

The House discussed a request made by 16 deputies to debate the employment policy in force at the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and decided to refer it to the House's Administrative Committee to take it up with the CSC president. The committee will prepare a detailed report on the subject following its discussion with the CSC president. The House also referred to the Legal Committee a revised draft law on the restoration of Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and a draft law on the Housing and Urban Development Corporation for the year 1990.

It further endorsed the Financial Committee's decision approving the importation and exportation law for the year 1990.

The law, which has undergone slight amendments, organised the steps followed in issuing exportation and importation licences and provides for collecting fines and duties on such licences.

Chamber of Commerce to implement five-year plan

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce (FJCC) is going ahead with plans laid in its five-year general development programme for 1989-1994 to develop its various departments and agencies with a view to promoting Jordan's national economy and stimulating trade with other nations, federation Chairman Mohammad Asfour said Sunday.

The federation is developing its research department by enabling its staff to conduct field surveys about trade and economic activities, has introduced a system by which encouragement is given to exporters of Jordanian products and is now increasing its cooperation with organisations concerned with exports in the private and public sectors," Asfour said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The federation, which came into being in 1955, seeks to achieve economic integration in the Arab World by encouraging inter-Arab trade and facilitating export/import operations, Asfour said.

At present the federation has 13 branches around the country, grouping 70,000 members, and they are all active in gathering information related to trade and economy, coordinating work with the Amman headquarters and helping solve problems related to economic and trade arbitration, and issues related to other federations and chambers of commerce in Arab and foreign countries, Asfour added.

The FJCC, Asfour said, maintains membership at the Ministry of Industry and Trade's Jordanian Commercial Centres Corporation (JCCC), the Social Security Corporation, the Institute of Public Administration, the Higher Supply Council, a government-appointed committee for encouraging investments and various economic councils.

In addition, he said, the federation is an active member of the Arab Chamber of Agriculture, Industry and Trade and the Arab Labour Organisation (ALO) and takes part in all activities conducted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the chambers of commerce linking the Arab World with chambers in Asia, America and Europe and the International Chamber of Commerce.

He said that the federation had reached agreements for promoting trade and economic cooperation with various countries and for the exchange of data and information related to training of personnel, organising trade fairs and a settling trade disputes through arbitration.

He said that the federation has now set up the Amman International Trading Company in cooperation with JCCC, the Jordan Industrial Estates Corporation, the Amman Chamber of Industry, the Housing Bank and the Arab Investment Bank to promote Jordan's trading potentials and to orient Jordanian companies on foreign markets to increase their exports.

PLO calls for the implementation of U.N. Security Council resolution 681

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Sunday called for the implementation of U.N. Security Council resolution 681 which called for providing protection to the Palestinian people under Israeli rule.

Bassam Abu Sharif, advisor to Palestine President Yasser Arafat, told a press conference here that the Security Council should deal with the Palestine question simultaneously with the Gulf crisis, and implement its resolution which calls for giving protection to the Palestinians in the face of Israel's repressive measures.

"Escalation of repressive and terrorist actions against the Palestinians on the part of the Israeli forces and the killing of five Palestinians Saturday in Gaza Strip underline Israel's premeditated plans to wage a war of terrorism on the Palestinians in a bid to evict them from their homeland," Abu Sharif told the press.

Saturday's brutal actions against the Palestinians, he said, manifest Israel's total disregard to Security Council resolutions and its mockery of the world community's principles and views.

These killings, he said, come only a few days after "the U.N. Security Council had asked the U.N. secretary general to use the mandate given to him in order to protect Palestinians."

He said the Palestine Liberation Organisation called on U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar and the 15-member Security Council to "respect their own decisions and to act immediately to protect Palestinians in the occupied territories."

Abu Sharif said the Palestinian leadership had taken "clear decisions to step up resistance to Israeli occupation."

He said that included unarmed Palestinian attacks against Israeli occupation forces and a wave of Palestinian stabbings in the territories, captured from Jordan, Egypt and Syria during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

"The stepping up of oppressive violence by Israeli forces will be met by more resistance by Palestinians. We will not allow at all the Israeli forces to terrorise our people and kill civilians without resistance," he said.

Abu Sharif called on world public opinion to understand



Bassam Abu Sharif

that by doing so, the Palestinian people are only using the rights endowed to them by the United Nations Charter and the Geneva Convention accords.

The 1919 Geneva Convention calls for protection and respect of the rights of citizens under occupation.

The PLO official also called on all Arab people, mainly workers across the Arab World, to boycott all countries that provide Israel with political, financial or military support.

"The PLO calls on the U.N. secretary general to use his full authorities in implementing resolution 681 in order to protect the Palestinians from further criminal actions," Abu Sharif said.

The resolution, he added, has authorised the secretary general to dispatch a team of U.N. officials and observers to monitor the situation inside the occupied territories and the PLO expects the United Nations to carry out its mission and, if need be, to send a multinational force to the occupied lands to ensure protection for the Palestinians.

Asked to comment on the Gulf crisis, Abu Sharif said that the PLO would pursue its efforts at all levels to find a political settlement to the crisis and prevent a war.

"Should the United States wage war on Iraq, it would open the door for hostilities for the first time between the American and Arab people everywhere with unpredictable consequences," said Abu Sharif.

He expressed confidence that an Arab solution based on United Nations legitimacy can lead to stability and security in the Gulf.

Foreign embassies, nationals are not going as far as Americans before Jan. 15

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — While the American government has advised its non-essential employees and citizens to leave Jordan well before January 15, in what was described as a "precautionary" measure in the event that anti-American sentiments increase should war erupt in the Gulf, no other embassy has made as stringent an "order" as the American government.

It is true that several Western embassies have contacted their nationals, created warden systems and held meetings or made suggestions as to what their nationals "could do" just before or after the deadline. But none has yet actually told their nationals that they "should" leave.

Briefings or telephone advice given by foreign embassies staff have mainly consisted of the following four essential points:

1) Tourists have been discouraged from travelling to Jordan for the time being by most countries and if tourists or other travellers have come they have been advised to make sure they have a reservation for their trip back home on any airline which travels to and from Amman. 2) Most foreign nationals have been informed that they and

their "dependents" should register with their embassies in case an evacuation should occur if war breaks out in the region. 3) Government or foreign staff who are on vacation or out of the country have been advised to extend their stay until they are "clearer". 4) Foreign nationals have been told to keep the "situation under review" and study the possibility of leaving if a war seems imminent.

The nearest any country came to the American reaction was Australia, whose embassy, which distributed a circular written by the ministry of foreign affairs and trade in Canberra dated December 28, advised non-essential staff to consider leaving the region "temporarily" because of the "uncertain situation in the region."

The circular also said that air service from the region to Australia may be reduced or cancelled altogether in some cases.

While the Canadian Embassy has contacted its citizens to inform them of the basic four-point briefing, Michael Chesson, the embassy's first secretary, told the Jordan Times that the "Canadian Embassy cannot tell its citizens how to act."

"The Jordanians have a well deserved reputation for being hospitable to foreigners. However,

should hostilities break out in the region no-one could predict (what the) reaction (might be)," Chesson said.

While the British Embassy issued a circular encompassing the "four points" in mid-October, it has not issued any new suggestions since, according to an embassy spokesman.

The German, French, Italian, Spanish, Swedish and Japanese embassies said they had not published or circulated any particular notice advising their nationals to leave Jordan.

"We have been updating our list of nationals, their addresses and phone numbers," said an official at the Spanish Embassy Sunday.

The German Embassy has organised an "information meeting" for January 7 to brief German citizens and their dependents on the situation. "So far nothing has been planned in terms of evacuation or notices to leave the country, but in response to a demand by our citizens we will give them a briefing on the 7th," said the embassy's councillor, Matthias Meyer.

Despite some "unofficial" reports that the Soviet Embassy had planes ready to evacuate its citizens, the embassy spokesman here in Amman said that the

Soviet mission had not advised its citizens to leave the country.

The Philippines Embassy denied having advised its citizens to leave Jordan. "We have advised all our citizens who are in Jordan and do not have legal work permits to contact us, that's all," said a spokeswoman for the embassy.

"We have also told our citizens that if their annual leave falls due in this time period they may consider taking it now," she added. "We don't want to create panic, but for those who can take their home leave now there is no reason for delaying it."

While several major airline companies have suspended their Amman route altogether, several others are considering similar moves.

Most foreign nationals who spoke to the Jordan Times showed no sign of fear for their safety because of possible anti-foreign sentiments.

"We are not afraid of the Jordanian people or that Saddam Hussein will start a war," said a European woman who has resided in Amman for 12 years. "Those who are afraid have already left," she said. "What we are afraid of is that the American-led 'coalition' will start another world war in this region."

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

CDD head meets Balqa governor

SALT (Petra) — Civil Defence Department (CDD) Director Major General Afif Al Ghoul Sunday met Balqa Governor Faleh Al Gharibeh and members of the governorate's Civil Defence Council. Ghoul discussed with them the governorate's civil defence plans. Gharibeh underlined the CDD's role and voluntary works it is accomplishing. He said the governorate's Civil Defence Council would carry out practical exercises in civil defence works.

Taffleh farmers aided

TAFLEH (Petra) — The Taffleh Governorate's committee entrusted with extending assistance to farmers growing cereals and cattle owners affected by the drought started Sunday distributing in-kind assistance to farmers. Taffleh Acting Governor Abdul Karim Al Malahmeh, who chairs the committee, said the committee would be distributing flour, oil and vegetables to farmers provided that they do not receive any assistance from the National Aid Fund (NAF) or Al Zakat (alms for the poor) committee.

AMC issues import export plan

AMMAN (Petra) — The Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC) issued its quarterly vegetables and fruits export/import plan for the months of January, February and March. The plan permits the exporting of all fresh fruits and vegetables while allowing importing only garlic and onions during the month of January. The plan also allows the Jordan Agricultural Manufacturing and Processing Company to import apples as long as it controls selling it on the Jordanian markets.

Banks alert municipality

NORTH SHUNEH (Petra) — Cities and Villages Development Bank has a JD 35,000 loan to Al Mashareh Municipality to help it carry out a commercial market construction project. The municipality is currently constructing a park in the town at the cost of JD 33,000. The establishment of the park comes in implementation of the municipality's policy aimed at encouraging internal tourism.

Evacuation exercise

NORTH SHUNEH (Petra) — The Civil Defence Department (CDD) in North Shuneh carried out an evacuation exercise which included extinguishing a fire at Ma'az Bin Jabal Hospital. The director of the CDD in Shuneh said the exercise included training workers and employees at the hospital on ways to evacuate it and to transfer the cases in it to an evacuation centre. He said this was part of the department's plan aiming at training citizens on civil defence works. He said 5,620 people were trained so far by the department in the district.

JPA slams peace ship interception

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Press Association (JPA) Sunday issued a statement denouncing the interception and seizure of the peace ship Ibn Khaldoun while on its way to Iraq carrying essential food supplies and medicines for Iraqi children as an act of piracy, and urged world organisations to step up their efforts to achieve peace in the Gulf.

"While peace loving people of the world are striving to attain peace in the Gulf, the United States continues to beat the drums of war and uses its military, economic and political influence to impose war on Iraq which it is now trying to starve," said the statement issued by the JPA board.

"The United States is endangering the lives of thousands of innocent people under the false pretext of implementing the international legitimacy, which has now become known to be the American legitimacy, in order to stifle people's freedoms and to deprive developing nations of the right to attain development," said the statement.

It said that American-led naval forces in the Gulf were stepping up their acts of piracy by seizing the peace ship which is carrying women and children and are now holding them hostage only because they had wanted to express their solidarity with the Iraqi people and to show their protest against war and aggression.

The statement appealed to various governments and organisations to condemn the United States actions and to prevent a devastating war in the Gulf. It said that the United States and its allies shoulder the responsibility for any danger that might come to the Gulf and the Arab Nation.

The 11,333-tonne Ibn Khaldoun was stopped Wednesday by Western warships in the north Arabian Sea outside the Strait of Hormuz, gateway to the Gulf, and the boarding parties found that the ship carried 240 women and children plus basic humanitarian supplies destined for Iraqi children.

The women on board tried to resist the boarding teams and there were some injuries. A Swedish woman on board has been attributed to a Gulf hospital.

Meanwhile Oman's Ambassador to Jordan Mohammad Ben Sultan has denied media reports that the peace ship Ibn Khaldoun had been seized near the island of Masira.

WHAT'S GOING ON EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition entitled "L'orient des cafes" at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by Hassan Jalal at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Ministry to issue new coupons for subsidised food items

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Supply announced Sunday that it would be soon distributing new food coupons to enable Jordanians to buy sugar, rice and powdered milk at subsidised prices.

The new coupons, it said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, are not very much different from the previous coupons which were valid for the last part of 1990.

The new coupons, which will be valid for the first four months of 1991, the statement said, look like the previous coupons but they have the seal of the Ministry of Supply stamped on the back in red and black; except for the coupons for milk which are quite different from those of the past year.

The ministry requested merchants not to accept or deal with coupons for sugar and rice unless they carry the specifications of the Ministry of Supply.

The coupons and ration cards were introduced in the past three months to allow only Jordanian citizens to benefit from subsidised sugar, milk and rice which are of great demand on the local market and to ration the sale of these commodities in view of the current economic situation resulting from the Gulf crisis.

Each of these commodities sells at nearly half the unsubsidised price offered to non-Jordanians.

The previous coupons distributed by the Ministry of Supply lost their validity on Dec. 22.

Seminar: Children strongly influenced by television

By Maha Addasi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian children are heavily exposed to and strongly influenced by television, said a Yarmouk University professor.

Dr. Ziyad Rifai, in a working paper entitled "Children, Television and Injuries in the Home," voiced concern over the amount of violence children are exposed to in programmes not suitable for them.

Rifai, a professor of journalism and advertising, said that "children learn by observation and they copy what they see."

He said that studies show children could remember violent scenes to the minutest detail up to and beyond eight months from the first time they saw them.

But it is the programmes targeted at children that Dr.

Rifai is most concerned about. "Cartoons, which attract children, are the most violent programmes shown, because in cartoons violence does not have any consequences," Rifai told the seminar on child safety in the home.

"People explode, get cut up, get crushed, get thrown off cliffs, but reappear unharmed in the following scene," he added.

Dr. Rifai pointed out that children, seeing that no harm is done during these scenes, may try to imitate them in real life, and expose themselves and others to possible harm.

According to Rifai, there is a tremendous amount of violent scenes in cartoons.

"A single 'Tom and Jerry' cartoon I studied contained eight accidents where one character hit an object; seven accidents where one character was hit with an object; seven accidents of falling down, five accidents

where a character was hit with a tool, three accidents resulting from kitchen utensils, three general accidents, two stabbing accidents and one burning accident," Dr. Rifai said.

But he said there was a reason for these "rough scenes."

"Violent scenes in cartoons are designed to keep the viewer's attention span up," Rifai said.

"The problem is that young minds do not understand the concept of television, and may interpret things in a different way," Rifai asserted. He cited an example of a four-year-old girl who, seeing her father in a televised interview, asked: "How did dad get inside the television set?"

"With that in mind, we can tell that children take television very seriously," he said.

He advised that children watch television under close adult supervision.

Feasibility study on King Abdullah canal ready in 1991

AMMAN (J.T.) — A feasibility study on boosting the effectiveness of the King Abdullah canal in the Jordan Valley, which began in early 1990 is due to be completed early next year, and a consultancy firm conducting the study has prepared draft tender documents for the implementation of the project, according to Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) Secretary General Abdul Aziz Wishah.

JVA board will study the document and the feasibility study in its final version before entering into serious discussion for financing the project which is to be implemented in the coming two years," said Wishah in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

According to Wishah, the project is of paramount importance in view of the scarce water re-

sources and the poor rainfall in Jordan, these factors constitute a real danger for farming which is done mainly in the Jordan Valley region.

"JVA which is the main responsible body for agriculture in the Jordan Valley region, is concerned with maintaining King Abdullah (formerly East Ghor) canal to prevent leakage and to save the precious water for irrigation," said Wishah in his statement.

He said that the feasibility study for the four facet project first entails conducting a comprehensive survey of the total length of the canal, its installations, pumping stations and equipment installed along the network.

The second stage calls for ensuring the flow of a steady low level of water supplies to reduce

the use of irrigation water and to ensure no flooding will occur.

The third stage entails conducting maintenance work along the canal and the installations as well as control gates. The fourth stage entails assessment of the financial cost of implementing the project.

The canal extends from Yarmouk River in the north to the Dead Sea in the south, a length of 110 kilometres.

According to Wishah, the canal can provide irrigation water to 24,000 hectares.

Wishah said that the first part of the canal, a length of 70 kilometres, was built 23 years ago, but subsequent extension work was conducted adding up to the canal's length and boosting it to benefit the entire Jordan Valley region.

Jordan Times

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Small link in big chain

SOVIET JEWISH emigration to Israel has reached new and ominous heights this year, with about 35,000 emigrants expected to arrive in December alone. The total number of emigres from the Soviet Union is projected to top the 180,000 figure during this year, thus making 1990 a record year for Jewish immigration into Palestine. This bumper year for Jewish resettlement in Israel comes at a critical juncture in the search for an equitable solution to the Palestinian question. It also comes amid escalation of Israeli oppression against the Palestinian people under occupation. No doubt the swelling of the Jewish population in Israel will beef up the demographic strength of the Zionist state and make the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict that much more removed from realisation. This added strength to Israel has prompted Tel Aviv to describe the Soviet complicity in the upsurge in Soviet Jewish transfer to Israel as an invaluable instrument that will make Israel a "great nation" at a time when the U.S. is still bolstering its prowess militarily and economically.

No wonder then that the sense of desperation among the Palestinians under occupation is increasing by leaps and bounds. The Palestinians are among the first to recognise that the pre-1967 borders of Israel will never be enough to cope with the massive new arrivals who will have to struggle against the indigenous people of the West Bank and Gaza Strip over territory and water resources. And when about two million Jewish immigrants end up taking roots in Israel, there is no way that such massive resettlement will not be at the expense of the Arabs in the occupied territories.

With Moscow and Washington sending such negative signals to the Arab World, it is hardly surprising that the Arabs themselves are not taking seriously their own verbal protestations against the policies of the two big powers and Israel itself. This has naturally strengthened the call by Baghdad for establishing a linkage between the conflict over Palestine with that over Kuwait. In this vein, Iraq's legitimate and well justified request for maintaining such an association between the two situations becomes the request of the Arabs everywhere who are genuinely concerned about the fate of the Palestinian people.

Meanwhile, the least that the Arab countries which are allying themselves with the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq can do is to address this massive Jewish immigration in an effective way. If linking the Kuwaiti conflict with the Palestinian situation is also anathema to their way of thinking, the minimum that they can be expected to do in return is to insist on a linkage between Jewish immigration and the resolution of the Palestinian problem.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A general strike staged by the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories Friday was in protest against continued crimes committed by Jewish settlers and as a tool used by the Arab population in their resistance against Israeli occupation, said Al Ra'i daily Saturday. The paper said that the strike served as a notification to the world community and Arab Nation that the recent U.N. Security Council resolution dealing with the situation in the occupied Arab territories did not provide protection to the Palestinians whose conditions are deteriorating and whose human rights are constantly violated. The general strike is a call on all peace loving people of the world to rally for the support of the oppressed Palestinians, and for calling on the Security Council to take very drastic actions to deter Israel from committing further atrocities and crimes against the Palestinian people and not to suffice itself by issuing mere resolutions which are not implemented, the paper noted. We need practical action by the Security Council which had repeatedly announced its determination to see international legitimacy implemented to safeguard world peace and security, the paper demanded. The paper said that the Security Council should be urged to take action against Israel, and the Arabs should not be deterred by the fear that Washington could veto the resolution because, the paper said, Washington's hostile action in this matter is needed so that those Arab states now allying themselves behind the United States in the Gulf crisis would take a different stand, and join the general Arab effort to stem Israel's criminal actions.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily Saturday blames the killing of a 20-year-old man in Zarqa on the availability of fire arms with the public, and says regardless of the motives for the murder, the availability of the weapons with or without licence can lure people to use them. Fakhri Kassar says that the 20-year-old man, Bashar, who was murdered along with his mother by his own father fell as a victim of the availability of fire arms with the head of the family. I do not know yet the motives behind the killing which took place in Zarqa on Thursday, but I do realise, as does everybody else that had not the weapon been there, the murder could not have been committed, the writer notes. Many of the crimes committed in our society, the writer adds, take place as a result of feuds, and probably in a fit of anger and rash actions, with the result that many innocent lives are lost.

By Ed Blanche
The Associated Press

NICOSIA — The U.S.-led 28-nation force in the Gulf, the biggest such force assembled since the Korean war, is expected to have a strength of more than 550,000 personnel by the end of January.

Iraq has an estimated 540,000 troops in Kuwait and southern Iraq and has mobilised tens of thousands more men.

Here is a breakdown of the forces confronting each other in the Gulf:

The United States: There are around 300,000 military personnel now in the region in Operation Desert Shield. In the next few weeks, that will reach 430,000. At the peak of the Vietnam War in 1968, some 545,000 Americans were involved.

Ground forces deployed in the first wave include the 82nd "All American" Airborne Division, the 101st "Screaming Eagles" Airborne Division, the 24th Mechanised Infantry Division, the 11th Air Defence Artillery Brigade, 197th Mechanised Infantry Brigade, the 1st Cavalry Division and the 3rd Armoured Cavalry Regiment.

The second-wave deployment includes three armoured divisions from Germany, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd, that will bolster American offensive capability on the ground for a possible thrust against Kuwait if it is still occupied by Iraq after the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline for withdrawal.

The U.S. force will have around 2,000 tanks when deployment is complete.

Three carrier battle groups built around the USS America, the USS Theodore Roosevelt and the USS Ranger, and the battleship USS Missouri, 300 more combat jets and the 45,000-man 5th Marine Expeditionary Force will also be deployed in the second phase.

Current amphibious capability is provided by 45,000-man of the 1st, 4th and 7th Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEF) who make up the 1st MEF. When deployment is complete, virtually the whole of the U.S. Marine Corps will be committed to Desert Shield.

There is a special forces contingent from the 1st Special Operations Command.

The U.S. fleet already in the Gulf, the Arabian Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean totals around 55 ships. They include the aircraft carriers Saratoga, John F. Kennedy and Midway, the battleship Wisconsin with 32 Tomahawk cruise missiles, five missile cruisers, four destroyers, several frigates, plus supply ships and an estimated six to eight nuclear submarines.

The aircraft carriers now in place have a combined strike force of 180 A-6 intruders F/A-18 Hornet fighters and F-14 Tomcats. The marines have some 60 AV-8B Harrier jump-jets. Those numbers will be doubled when the second-phase formations arrive.

Among the 800 air combat aircraft deployed so far are 22 F117A Stealth fighter-bombers and as many as 38 long-range F-111F bombers.

There are an estimated 150 F-16s and F-15s, more than 70 A-10 tank-killing Thunderbolts and unspecified numbers of F-4 Wild Weasel air-defence suppression jets and other combat

Half a million soldiers ready to do their duty



American soldiers use a drainage ditch to shelter from dust as they eat their lunch in Saudi Arabia.

aircraft deployed at 30 airbases in the region. Three squadrons are based in southern Turkey. A squadron of an estimated 26 B-52G strategic bombers is on the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia.

Britain: With 18,200 personnel in the region, and 16,000 more to be deployed by mid-January, Britain will have the second largest western contingent in the region after the United States with 35,000 men, at least 50 combat jets and a naval armada.

It is Britain's biggest military deployment abroad since the Korean war.

The three-ship Armilla patrol permanently in the Gulf was beefed up to 16 ships, including three missile destroyers, five missile frigates, three minisweepers with support ships.

Four squadrons of Tornado and Jaguar interceptors and ground attack jets are in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Three Nimrod maritime reconnaissance aircraft are in Oman. More Jaguars are expected.

The 7th Armoured Brigade, successors to the famous "Desert Rats" of World War II, with 120 Challenger tanks and 9,500 troops is attached to the U.S. marine force in northeastern Saudi Arabia in Britain's biggest military operation since the 1982 Falklands War against Argentina.

It is being joined by the "infantry heavy" Fourth Brigade from Germany, with 13 Challenger tanks, scores of armoured fighting vehicles, artillery, multiple rocket launchers, 36 attack and scout helicopters and major engineering units whose task will be to breach Iraqi defences in Kuwait.

The two brigades will form the 30,000-man 1st armoured division.

France: By mid-January it will have 10,000 men in the region, including army formations mak-

ing up the 6th Light Armoured Division. It is the biggest French military deployment overseas since the 1954-62 Algerian war.

It has 12-14 warships with some 1,200 men deployed. The warships include a guided-missile cruiser, two missile destroyers, four frigates and a corvette with support vessels.

France has sent three squadrons of interceptors and fighter-bombers and another squadron has been committed.

Its 4,000-man rapid action force is deployed with Arab forces in the northeastern Saudi desert. It includes the 5th Combat Helicopter Regiment with 42 gunships, the Foreign Legion's 2nd infantry regiment with anti-tank missiles, the 1st Spahis Cavalry Regiment with armoured vehicles and an anti-aircraft missile unit. France may soon send an additional 1,000-man artillery unit with 24 155-mm guns.

A second-wave deployment now under way includes a marine artillery regiment, another combat helicopter regiment with 24 Puma gunships and a Dragoon regiment with 40 AMX-30 battle tanks.

A company of 190 paratroopers equipped for chemical warfare is in the United Arab Emirates. There are 7,300 paratroopers stationed in Djibouti across the Red Sea from Saudi Arabia with a squadron of Mirage fighters.

Italy: The frigates Libeccio, Orsa and Zeffireo and a support ship, the Stromboli, are in the Gulf. The corvettes Minerva and Stinge are in the Eastern Mediterranean replacing U.S. units assigned to the Gulf.

A squadron of eight Tornado fighters is based near Abu Dhabi to provide air cover for Italian warships. Six Starfighter jets are to be deployed. No ground force deployment is planned.

Canada: The destroyers Athabaskan and Terra Nova and the supply ship Protecteur are heading for the Gulf. A squadron of 18 CF-18 fighter jets from Germany is in Saudi Arabia.

The Netherlands: The frigates Witte de With and Pieter Florisz are in the Gulf of Oman with the combat supply ship Zuiderkruis.

Spain: The frigates Nuaman, Infanta Cristina and Diana are patrolling the Bab Al Mandeb Strait, southern gateway to the Red Sea.

Australia: The guided-missile frigates Adelaide and Darwin and the supply ship Success are in the Red Sea.

Belgium: The minehunters Iris and Myosotis with the supply ship Zinnia are in the Gulf of Oman. The Belgians have also committed four C-130 military transport planes.

Argentina: The destroyer Almirante Brown and the frigate Spiro are in the Red Sea. A 100-man army unit will also be sent.

The Soviet Union: The Udaloy-class destroyer Admiral Tributs and an anti-submarine ship are in the Gulf of Oman. Moscow has indicated it would send ground forces, but only under U.N. command.

Greece: The frigate Elli is in the Red Sea. Greece is supplying merchant ships for the U.S. seafit.

Germany: It is providing merchant ships to the seafit, ammunition for the British forces and \$2 billion towards the multinational force. Germany's constitution prohibits it committing military forces.

Denmark: The corvette Olfert Fischer is in the Gulf. Danish merchant ships are helping in the U.S. seafit.

Norway: The coast guard cutter Andenes is in the Gulf supporting the Danish corvette. Norway has offered anti-chemical warfare equipment.

Portugal: The naval support

Sao Miguel is carrying equipment and supplies to the British force. Portugal has also allowed U.S. aircraft to refuel at its airbases.

Poland: It will send a military field hospital and a hospital ship to the Gulf.

Czechoslovakia: It has sent a 200-man army unit with anti-chemical warfare equipment, the first Warsaw Pact country to send forces to the Gulf.

Honduras: It is sending 150 troops to Saudi Arabia and possibly 350 more, in the country's first foreign military deployment.

Bulgaria: It will send a small detachment of military medical personnel.

New Zealand: It is sending two C-130 transports and an army medical team.

The Philippines: It will send a small volunteer detachment of military medical personnel.

Allied Arab forces:

The Gulf Cooperation Council (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, The United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Kuwait): A rapid deployment force of up to 10,000 troops is based at Haifa Al Batina, northeast Saudi Arabia, 65 kilometres south of the Kuwait border. They and allied Arab-Islamic forces form the first line of defence, with the Americans and others south of them.

The GCC force has been beefed up with some 7,000 soldiers of Kuwait's 20,000-man army who escaped their country when Iraq invaded. Most of their heavy weapons were captured by Iraq, but some combat jets, naval attack craft and tanks were saved.

The GCC and other Gulf Arab forces total around 150,500 men, 330 combat aircraft, 800 tanks and 36 major naval units, although not all are likely to be involved in Desert Shield. They are supported by:

Egypt: 20,000 troops, including paratroopers, commandos, chemical warfare specialists and infantry, are in Saudi Arabia with some 400 tanks. The force includes the 3rd and 4th armoured divisions and the 3rd mechanised infantry division. Another 7,000 men are being sent. Some 2,250 troops are in the UAE.

Syria: Some 19,000 troops, including elite special forces units who fought the Israelis and others in Lebanon, are in Saudi Arabia. Most of the 15,000-man 9th Armoured Division with some 270 T-62 tanks, have arrived. Another 2,000 troops are in the UAE.

Pakistan: 5,000 troops are in Saudi Arabia and 2,000 in the UAE with 1,000 advisers. Some 5,000 advisers are already attached to the Saudi armed forces. An additional armoured division may be committed.

Morocco: It has 1,200 troops in Saudi Arabia and 500 in the UAE.

Bangladesh: It has 2,000 troops, including engineering and infantry units, in Saudi Arabia.

Senegal: 500 troops are in Saudi Arabia.

Niger: It has sent 480 troops to guard the holy shrines of Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia.

Iraq: The army has seven corps totalling 55-60 divisions. There are 555,000 regular troops and 480,000 reserves all of whom are believed to have been mobilised. Regular forces include six divisions of elite Republican Guards.

Iraq says it has a militia called the popular army with eight million men, but its true strength is estimated at around 850,000.

Iraq has 5,500 tanks, including some 500 high-quality T-72s and 1,000 medium-quality T-62s; 3,500 artillery guns; 200 multiple rocket launchers; an estimated 500 surface-to-air missiles; more than 330 surface-to-air missile launchers, including captured Kuwaiti systems; some 700 combat aircraft, including Soviet-supplied long-range SU-21 fighter-bombers and advanced MIG-29 interceptors, spread around an estimated 25 heavily protected airbases.

Its main naval units are a training frigate with anti-submarine torpedoes; an estimated eight Soviet-built missile-attack craft; and six torpedo boats plus several captured Kuwaiti missile craft.

In Kuwait, Iraq has an estimated 13 divisions, four of them armoured, totalling 280,000 troops, 2,200 T-55 and T-62 tanks and a buildup continues.

A further 15-18 divisions, including the Republican Guard divisions with up to 1,800 tanks and 800 guns, are dug-in in southern Iraq as a strategic reserve. This also includes elements of the 1st, 3rd, 4th and 7th army corps. All told this force has some 230,000 men with 750 guns. Also deployed in the Kuwait theatre are 2,500 armoured personnel carriers and 2,700 guns.

Iraq is deploying some 250,000 more men — seven new divisions and 150,000 reservists — in Kuwait.

Silkworm anti-ship missiles are believed to have been deployed to counter any U.S. amphibious landing in Kuwait. Frog-7 battlefield missiles have also been deployed, including batteries captured in Kuwait, behind formidable defence lines.

Iran finds its way back into Gulf again

By Aly Mahmoud
The Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar — Spurred by Iraqi aggression, Gulf Arab leaders say they're ready to forge a new regional security structure with Iran, a country that for years they feared.

But some observers are sceptical that Iran and its neighbours will ever overcome mutual suspicions and engage in meaningful cooperation to defend the oil-rich region.

The Gulf Cooperation Council — Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait — was formed in 1981 primarily to counter the threat posed by Iran's Islamic revolution and its stated aim of toppling the conservative Gulf monarchies.

But Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani began a process of rapprochement with the Gulf states following the death of Iran's revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, in June 1989.

Saddam Hussein's Aug. 2 seizure of Kuwait accelerated that process. Rafsanjani's foreign minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, has been courting Iran's jittery neighbours since then.

Saddam's actions proved how vulnerable the Gulf states were

and underlined their dependence on the Americans, despite massive spending on high-tech weaponry.

The leaders of the GCC states made clear during a four-day summit in Doha that ended last Tuesday that they now believe Iran has to be part of long-term defence arrangements in the strategic region.

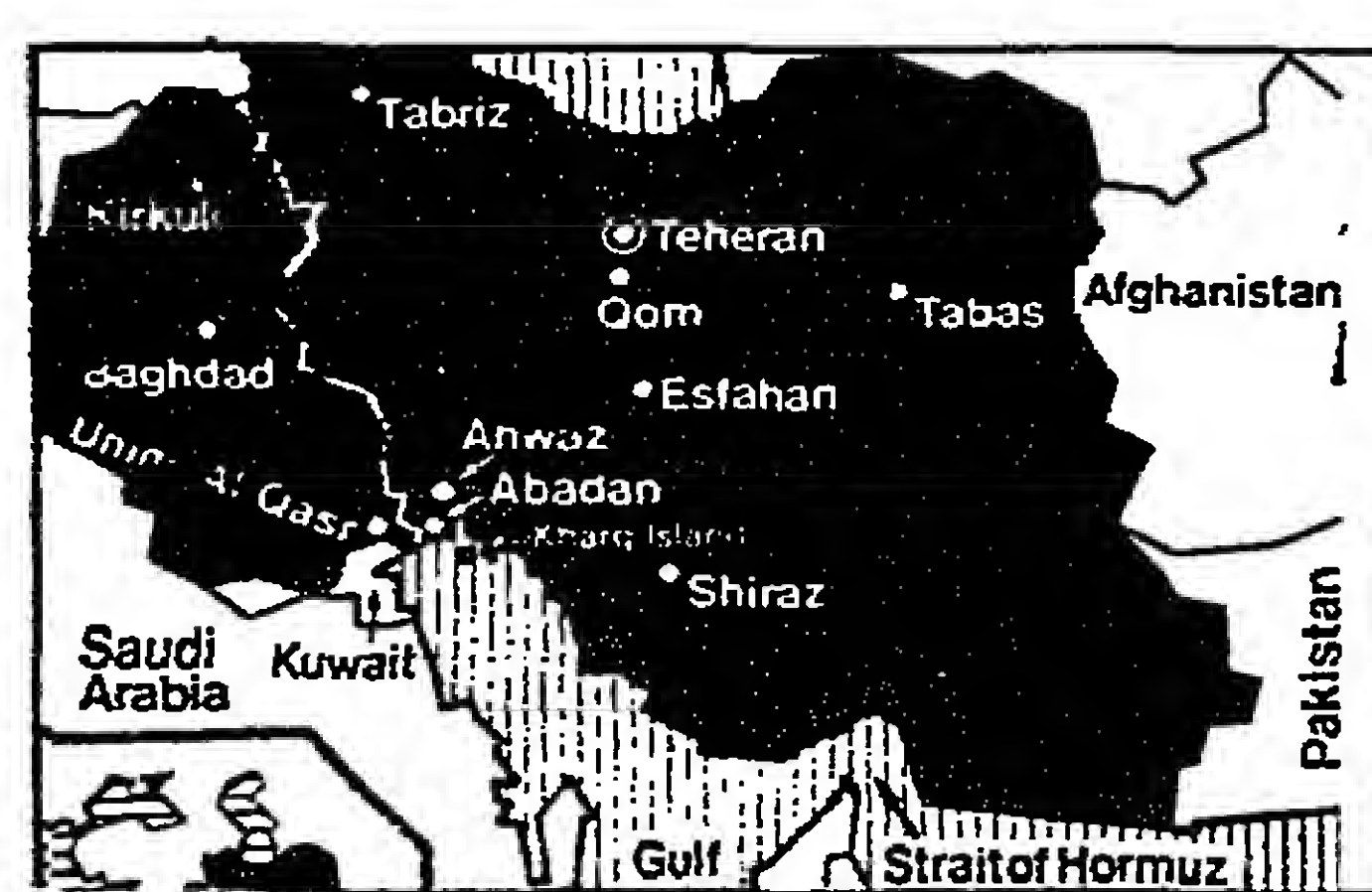
A summit communiqué expressed interest in developing "special relations" with Tehran and urged it to settle differences with GCC states "seriously and realistically."

Kuwait's minister of state for foreign affairs, Sheikh Nasser Mohammed Al Sabah, stressed during a recent visit to Tehran: "without the powerful presence of Iran, no regional security is possible or practical."

Sheikh Nasser's statement reflected how the political map of the region has been turned upside down by the invasion of Kuwait, producing alignments that only a couple of years ago would have been unthinkable.

Iranian-backed terrorists for years waged a bombing campaign in Kuwait and tried to assassinate the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah, in 1985.

The Iranians plotted in 1981 to



The indications are that Saudi Arabia and Iran could soon restore relations, a necessary step before the two biggest Gulf states can join forces in a new security structure.

topple Bahrain's ruling family. Saudi Arabia was a target for Iranian subversion where it hurt

most, the annual Hajj to Mecca. Riyadh severed relations with Tehran in April 1988.

Most of the GCC states sided with Iraq during the 1980-88 war with Iran. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia gave an estimated \$34 billion to Baghdad. Iran attacked their ships in retaliation.

Since the 1988 ceasefire, Rafsanjani has tried to end Iran's isolation and rebuild bridges with its neighbours.

The indications are that Saudi Arabia and Iran could soon restore relations, a necessary step before the two biggest Gulf states can join forces in a new security structure.

That's unlikely to happen until Kuwait has been liberated and Iraq humbled.

There will be other obstacles to overcome.

Iran is likely to demand a pre-eminent position in any alliance that emerges, something the Gulf Arabs are not expected to accept without murmur.

Diplomats said Iran stands to gain the most from an alliance and cautioned that Tehran was not expected to abandon its aim of regional domination.

Iran has opposed the invasion of Kuwait, but it has also condemned the Western military force brought into the Gulf by the Saudis.

The Americans say they want to see a new security structure in

the region, which sits on two-thirds of the world's oil reserves.

Saudi and other Arab officials say that will involve sizeable U.S. forces staying on for some time, a factor likely to antagonise the Iranians and other Muslim fundamentalists.

Rafsanjani has largely outflanked them in a post-Khomeini power struggle, but they remain a thorn in his side.

Tehran's radical Kayhan Daily on Friday dismissed a regional defence accord as "a mirage" and warned that Iran would be "the only loser."

It said that the GCC was U.S. creation and that ally with the Gulf states would only serve Washington's interests.

"In drawing closer to Iran, Arabs are motivated more by spite toward Iraq and less by conviction about Iran's purported good intentions," said Saudi newspaper editor who requested anonymity.

But Qatar's foreign minister, Mubarak Al Khater, noted: "our determination to involve Iran in the Gulf-wide security arrangements is based primarily on geographical realities and the expressed willingness of the Iranian government."

Charter

(Continued from page 1)

need for a national charter which will serve as a criteria for our commitment to achieve the nation's goals. The past eight months emphasised our apprehensions of what might ensue in the wake of the cold war era if we are to confront the future without democracy and without Arab human rights, especially the right to free expression.

"You deserve appreciation and praise for what you have offered to the country and people, and the National Charter will serve as a reference document and a guideline for Jordan's policies in all its national and pan-Arab dimensions and in the defence and developmental fields. This is a document which will enhance our national and spiritual identity and enable the Jordanian potentials to be released towards achieving creativity in the process of achieving its goals. This is expected from the National Charter to achieve, specially since the commission members who prepared it represented all sectors of the Jordanian people."

"The National Charter is the foundation on which the national forces will build democracy to attain the national aspirations. Democracy can never be complete without pluralism and such pluralism, if practiced under the umbrella of the National Charter, is bound to win the support of all citizens whose political groups would be competing to protect their nation and playing their role with integrity and responsibility."

Almad Obaidat, who chairs the commission, deserves special praise for his dedication and management and control of the debates and for his extra efforts to attain this success."

Earlier, Obaidat delivered an address in which he said that the charter came as a result of serious efforts and lengthy deliberations which were held in an atmosphere of amity and frankness.

The commission members, he said, placed higher national interests above all other considerations and the result was the National Charter which won the backing of all the commission members who worked in total cooperation drawing their ideas from the Jordanian Constitution.

Obaidat said the National Charter can be regarded as a new genuine start towards a future in which political pluralism can play a leading role in transforming the concept of national service within the concept of democracy and respect of the law.

Obaidat said the charter was approved by all the commission members, who are keen on helping the country to pursue the course of construction and progress.

The presentation of the National Charter to the King was attended by Prime Minister Mudar Badran, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, the King's Political Advisor Adnan Abu Odeh and Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid.

Iraq

(Continued from page 1)

Earlier in the day, Information Minister Latif Jassem denied reports of secret contacts with Washington to avert the threatened conflict.

Jassem's denial followed a report by Radio Monte Carlo that quoted unidentified diplomatic sources in Cairo as saying Iraq was considering some ideas proposed by Washington.

The radio said these include an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait in exchange for assurances that it will not be attacked by the multinational force that is expected to total more than half a million personnel by the end of January.

"These are ridiculous ideas and figments of the imagination," Jassem told the Iraqi News Agency.

Loucar's intervention signalled an effort by the Non-Aligned Movement to negotiate a settlement as the pressure on Iraq to relinquish Kuwait, now designated Iraq's 19th province, mounts daily.

Yugoslavia is the current chairman of the 102-nation group, which includes Kuwait and Iraq.

"The talks were very delicate and both ministers need more time for discussions," a Yugoslav diplomat said.

The foreign minister, who had been scheduled to depart Saturday after meeting with Saddam, extended his visit one more day to see the president. No explanation was given for why the meeting was not held Saturday.

The diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity, declined to comment on reports that Loucar would discuss with Saddam details of a non-aligned peace initiative.

Loucar last month visited Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Syria and Jordan for talks on the crisis.

Aziz said before beginning discussions with Loucar, that there had been breakthrough in the stalemate over fixing a date for a proposed visit to Baghdad by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker.

"No progress has so far been made on this issue," he told reporters.

Both sides accuse the other of stalling. Saddam has said he is prepared for "serious and constructive dialogue" with the Americans, but diplomats see little sign of any meaningful talks between Washington and Baghdad.

The Iraqis insist on linkage between an Iraqi pullout from Kuwait with an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. Washington is equally adamant in rejecting such a linkage.

Belousov met Saddam Thursday. But no details of their talks were released.

In an interview with the government daily Al Joumhouriya on Saturday, Belousov said they "covered bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest, specially those related to the Gulf crisis."

Moscow supports the U.N. Security Council resolution authorising the use of force if Iraq does not withdraw from Kuwait by Jan. 15.

It has made repeated diplomatic efforts since the invasion to avert the threat of war. There was no indication whether Belousov's visit had any positive effect in this regard.

Belousov told Al Joumhouriya that the majority of Soviet contract workers left Iraq will leave before Jan. 10.

Most of the 10,000 Soviet citizens who were in Iraq at the outbreak of the crisis have already left.

The Soviet embassy said 160 Soviets, employed mainly in oil and power installations, will be staying on.

Amid the apparently faltering diplomatic campaign, the Iraqis stepped up preparations for war, with reports that special commando squads are being trained for behind-the-lines attacks on American forces in Saudi Arabia.

Al Joumhouriya warned Iraq's 17 million people Saturday, particularly those in Baghdad and other cities, to be prepared for mock air raid warnings to test civil defence drills.

Aziz has also said that there would be a bloodbath in the Gulf if the United States and its allies refused to discuss Baghdad's point of view.

"We do not want to be treated as pariahs. If our interlocutors do not agree to discussing our point of view, there will be war," Aziz said in an interview published on Friday in Spain's El Pais newspaper.

Aziz said Iraq was capable of taking on the United States because it had gained "great military experience" during its eight-year war against Iran.

"The question is whether the United States can stand a war," he said. "Iraq is not Mexico. The North Americans will fight thousands of kilometres from their territory."

"Bush must explain why he wants war, which if it comes will be a real bloodbath," Aziz said.

One hope for peace in the Gulf would be the realisation among Washington's allies that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was linked to its concern over Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories, Aziz said.

Some people maintain that to recognise that link would mean a victory for us, but really it would be (a victory) for the whole world," he said.

Aziz said the flow of Soviet Jews to Israel was "the potential cause of new wars. If the United States does not attack us now, sooner or later Israel will."

Aziz described Washington's rejection of Baghdad's position on the timing of bilateral talks as "arrogant."

"Even when they offered dialogue they did so in a threatening way, and we have said clearly that we will not give in to pressures," he said.

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa said in an interview published Saturday that no one can help Iraq unless it withdraws completely from Kuwait and warned that Iraq is staring disaster in the face.

Sharaa also wrote off efforts to find a so-called "Arab solution" to the Gulf crisis to avert war in the region.

"Iraq must withdraw completely from Kuwait," he told Lebanon's independent Al Diyar daily.

"Without this withdrawal, no one in the world will be able to help Iraq avert disaster," he stressed.

Sharaa said that Arab countries cannot resolve the crisis "because it has been internationalised and has become the responsibility of the United Nations Security Council."

"The Arab solution was buried during the early days of the crisis," he told Al Diyar.

Sharaa urged Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait before the Jan. 15 deadline.

"Jan. 15 will be the beginning of a new era of dangers that we do not wish to reach. We hope Iraq will withdraw from Kuwait before that date to escape facing

the military option," the Syrian minister said.

Asked about Iraq's insistence on linking any pullout from Kuwait with an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, Sharaa said:

"When Iraq invaded Kuwait, the Iraqi leadership mentioned nothing about Palestine. It did not say that it had sent its army to Kuwait to liberate Palestine."

"The linkage between the invasion of Kuwait and the Palestine question is not going to serve the Palestinian cause," he added.

Britain said Saturday that Iraq would face "massive retaliation" if he used chemical or biological weapons in the Gulf.

Armed Forces Minister Archie Hamilton, in a radio interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), restated Britain's vow that military action by Iraq would be met with the full force of the international alliance massed in the Gulf.

"I personally believe that if (Iraq) is going to use weapons of mass destruction it has got to be clear to (Iraq) that (it) will have massive retaliation," Hamilton said.

U.S. and British troops are being inactivated against biological weapons, and Britain has announced plans to distribute gas masks to its civilians living in the Gulf.

Expressing optimism over the prospects for a diplomatic solution to the Gulf crisis, House of Representatives Armed Services Committee Chairman Les Aspin released a "white paper" Friday that sets out rough guidelines for judging the adequacy of such a settlement.

He also cautioned that any diplomatic effort must be supported and supplemented by military and economic pressure from the anti-Iraq alliance.

One clear determinant of a successful diplomatic outcome, Aspin said, is the extent to which Iraqi leader Saddam complies with the various United Nations resolutions — particularly the resolution demanding Iraq's complete and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwaiti territory.

"The American people," he noted, "would regard a complete withdrawal by Saddam Hussein from Kuwait as victory almost regardless of what else is agreed upon around the edges."

Another critical test "is whether we can hold together the anti-Iraq coalition to contain Iraq in the future," Aspin said.

In his analysis, the chairman noted that "almost any diplomatic solution... will be trumpeted as a great victory by Saddam Hussein," but he added that the question of whether it is in fact a victory will depend on a series of interrelated issues, including the viability of the anti-Iraq coalition and what kinds of material gains can be claimed by the Iraqis.

Aspin, who recently announced that the diplomatic option offers the best hope for a peaceful resolution in the Gulf, stressed that diplomacy will not be effective unless it is backed up by a credible threat. "Our ability to achieve an acceptable diplomatic solution depends on how much economic and military pressure we put on Saddam," he said.

In fact, Aspin suggested that economic and military pressure will probably continue to be an important part of Washington's overall policy towards Iraq, regardless of how the current crisis is resolved. "I believe," he said,

Hijack

(Continued from page 1)

Freed passengers said the hijackers "showed no physical or verbal violent intentions" and made no statement about their motives, an Algerian official in the capital said.

Algerian Interior Minister Mohammad Salah Mohammadi negotiated the release of the captives throughout the day with the hijackers. Western diplomats in Algiers said a news blackout had been imposed on the talks.

Algiers Radio said earlier the hijackers were protesting against a crackdown on Muslim fundamentalists in Tunisia and wanted to go to Cairo.

Source close to the negotiations confirmed that the hijackers hoped to fly to Egypt. But officials in Cairo said they had been refused permission to land there.

"We don't encourage terrorists and we don't indulge in terrorist activities," said a presidential palace spokesman in Cairo. "We gave instructions to all airports not to receive terrorists."

Egypt's Middle East News Agency meanwhile cited the French Radio Monte Carlo as saying the hijackers wanted to go to Libya. No source was cited.

The hijackers have demanded water and 20 hours of fuel to fly to a foreign country from Annaba, about 100 kilometres east of Algiers, Algerian sources said.

Conflicting reports surrounded the identity of the air pirates. The official APS news agency cited informed sources as saying they could be Algerian, but provided no further details.

An Algerian official close to the negotiations said the air pirates could be Algerian Islamic fundamentalists protesting the crackdown against their brother Muslims.

They're not going easily," the official said of talks.

Iran

(Continued from page 1)

In September, a month after the Iraqi invasion, the Iranians said they were strengthening their seriously depleted air force with Soviet-supplied supersonic MiG-29 interceptors.

They are believed to have a squadron of 14 of the sophisticated fighters.

The missiles and MiGs were acquired under a \$6 billion defence and economic deal signed by Rafsanjani in Moscow last year. It is possible that the new tanks the commanders referred to will also be coming from the Soviet Union.

Last month, the government merged the Revolutionary Guards' naval forces with the regular navy to increase their effectiveness and held large-scale manoeuvres in the Gulf, the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Oman.

The Revolutionary Guards still have their own military and air wings, which have not yet been integrated with regular armed forces.

Gaza

(Continued from page 1)

road barricade came under a barrage of rocks thrown by Arabs from mosque and house rooftops.

Israeli officials have predicted an upsurge in the three-year Palestinian uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, linking it to the upcoming Jan. 1 "Fateh" day.

It marks the 26th anniversary of the first anti-Israeli attack by the Fateh wing of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). In the Jan. 1, 1965 raid, a Fateh guerrilla squad infiltrated into Israel and placed a small bomb at the country's water carrier.

The army had clamped a curfew on the Shati refugee camp in the Gaza Strip and on a number of camps in the West Bank ahead of the Fateh anniversary.

In the West Bank refugee camp of Deheishah, near Bethlehem, masked activists released pigeons and balloons in the colours of the Palestinian flag hours after a curfew on the camp's 10,000 residents was lifted.

suffering one dead in a later clash.

Israeli troops were searching Nasser Hospital Saturday for people involved in the fighting and staff said soldiers were taking pictures of the wounded.

At least one man shot in the abdomen was taken away by troops. Red Cross representatives and members of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) were seen trying to persuade the soldiers to hand over the wounded man.

Nasser Hospital officials said more than 40 people had been treated for teargas inhalation.

The troops battling the demonstrators Saturday were mainly young conscripts. In addition to the army, some 30 border policemen were involved in the clashes.

Palestinians say younger soldiers are more likely to open fire than the older reserve soldiers.

Fateh was founded by Yasser Arafat in 1965. It is a driving force behind the three-year Palestinian revolt against Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

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Bush

(Continued from page 1)

for an exchange of visits," Mark Dillen, a State Department spokesman, said.

Joseph C. Wilson, the senior U.S. diplomat in Baghdad, for the second day in a row Friday did not discuss the Gulf crisis with Iraqi Foreign Ministry officials, Dillen said.

Wilson had been in almost daily contact with Deputy Foreign Minister Nizar Hamdoun or other Iraqi officials.

He referred to the stalled proposal by Bush for Iraq to send Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz to Washington and then for U.S. Secretary of State James Baker to go to Baghdad to see President Saddam Hussein.

The cutoff for a Baker trip to Iraq is Jan. 3.

Iraq had invited Baker to visit Jan. 12, but he refused, saying it was too close to the deadline for withdrawal.

Quayle heads for visit to U.S. troops

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. Vice-President Dan Quayle, who has taken a hawkish stand on Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, was heading for Saudi Arabia Saturday to bolster the resolve of U.S. troops there. Quayle was to make a new year's tour of troops from all branches of the U.S. military in the Gulf crisis zone.

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JORDAN MARKET PLACE

Pakistan plans wide-ranging financial, commercial reform

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistan intends to abolish exchange controls and slash tariffs on imports as part of a radical economic reform programme, Finance Minister Sartaj Aziz has said.

Within three to four months there will be a major liberalisation of the nation's foreign exchange reserves are at an adequate level, he told Reuters in an interview.

"We are going to reduce gradually and ultimately abolish exchange controls," said Aziz, who described the plan as a "calculated risk."

The uncertainty created by the Gulf crisis could eventually benefit Pakistan as Middle East capital looked for a more secure home, the minister said.

"Don't forget that after (problems in) Lebanon, there were people looking for somewhere to put their money," Aziz added.

Currently Pakistan has tough restrictions on transfer of funds in and out of the country. Foreign investors must get permission from the government to repatriate profits while Pakistanis living here are not allowed to set up bank accounts abroad and face limits on the amount of foreign exchange they can take out of the country.

Aziz said Pakistan's highly protective tariff system would be dismantled over the next two years with the average tariff rate cut to 30 per cent from 75 per cent currently.

The plans are part of an ambitious drive to reform the economy. The new conservative

government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, which was elected at the end of October, has announced a major privatisation programme and a package of tax and duty incentives to promote industry.

Aziz said if Pakistan could make its economy more outward looking then annual economic growth rates of nine to 10 per cent would not be beyond it.

However, the Gulf crisis has been threatening to send the economy into a tailspin before the reforms have time to work.

"It is really unfortunate that at a time when we are making dramatic changes in our policy framework and moving ahead fast there should be an unfavourable international environment for us," Aziz said.

The impact of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on Islamabad is less than it was in October because of the drop in oil prices.

Aziz said the Gulf crisis would cost Pakistan a total of \$1.4 billion a year in higher oil costs and loss of trade and remittances from Pakistani workers who fled the Gulf. This is down from around \$2.0 billion estimated two months ago.

Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves are depleted, sinking to a dangerously low \$59 million at the end of November, enough to cover only three days of imports. They have since recovered to between \$150 and \$200 million, Aziz said.

The government is desperately trying to promote exports through incentives and is seeking emergency economic aid to in-

crease the reserves and replace lost revenue.

Aziz said the revenue gap had been partially closed by a 25 per cent rise in export earnings in the first five months of the fiscal year ending June 30, 1991 from the year-earlier period. He did not disclose the precise figures.

In June the government of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto set an export target of \$5.5 billion for 1990/91 against \$4.8 billion in 1989/90.

Pakistan's economic aid position has been sticky following a decision by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to suspend payments from a funding package last June because of Islamabad's failure to meet a series of economic targets.

New U.S. economic and military aid was suspended from Oct. 1 after President George Bush failed to certify that Pakistan was not developing nuclear weapons.

But Aziz said he was confident that the IMF and the World Bank would offer Pakistan financial support to help offset the Gulf crisis impact.

"The reform agenda for privatisation, for deregulation, for financial reforms, for banking reforms is now running ahead of the expectations of these institutions," he said.

Pakistan is hoping for aid from Gulf states. Kuwaiti Ambassador Qasim Omar Al Yagout said about three weeks ago that his government, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates would probably lend Pakistan \$500 million to bolster its reserves.

Matsushita and MCA complete purchase contract

NEW YORK (R) — Japan's Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. Ltd. said Saturday it had completed its \$6.13 billion tender offer to purchase MCA Inc.

The takeover is the biggest ever by a Japanese company in the United States. Matsushita said in a statement that 77.7 million shares of MCA had been tendered as of its 12:01 deadline Saturday, representing 97 per cent of all outstanding shares of MCA.

Matsushita said that it had arranged financing for payment to shareholders beginning Thursday and that it expected to complete its merger of MCA into a wholly-owned subsidiary within about two weeks.

The completion of the merger followed actions by two federal judges Friday who rejected 11th-hour attempts to block the deal. The cases were viewed as the final hurdles to the merger.

Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia denied a request by Go-Video Inc. to stop the takeover. The manufacturer of videocassette recorders had said the deal violated antitrust laws.

In Los Angeles, a federal district judge rejected the motion of a shareholder who complained that MCA Chairman Lew Wasserman was given preferential treatment.

An MCA spokesman said the shareholder lawsuit was considered the more serious threat to the takeover, the largest ever by a Japanese company in the United States.

The plaintiff contended that shareholders were not offered the chance to swap their shares for Matsushita stock, as Wasserman was. The deal allows him to avoid paying about \$109 million in capital gains tax.

Other shareholders will receive \$66 per share in the tender offer. Stockholders also will receive shares in MCA's television station, WWOR-TV in Secaucus, New Jersey, valued by analysts at \$5 a share.

MCA, founded in 1924, owns Universal Pictures, theme parks, record labels and other interests. Its most famous products include the movies E.T., The Extra-Terrestrial, Back To The Future and Jaws.

With the completion of the deal, MCA, the nation's fourth-largest entertainment company, becomes the third major Hollywood studio to go to a foreign buyer.

Matsushita rival Sony Corp last year bought Columbia Pictures for \$3.4 billion, and Italy's Pathe Corp. this year bought MGM/UA Entertainment Co. for \$1.36 billion.

Matsushita, the world's 12th-biggest company, bought MCA in part to assure a steady supply of software — movies, music and television shows — for the electronic hardware it manufactures.

Gorbachev orders new measures to help lame ducks of perestroika

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Mikhail Gorbachev announced new measures Saturday to protect poorer citizens and prop up businesses struggling as a result of his perestroika reform programme.

Two presidential decrees, published by the Soviet news agency TASS, ordered a special extra-budgetary fund to be created and a new sales tax to be introduced next year.

As the country moves towards a market economy, one decree said setting up an economic stabilisation fund would help to support "enterprises experiencing difficulties through no fault of their own."

The fund, to be held by the central government until an economic agreement is reached with the country's 15 republics, will finance a variety of projects "in the interests of all republics."

Its resources will be drawn from money previously allocated for social security contributions, factory maintenance, profits re-

sulting from price increases and revenue from privatisation.

Areas that will benefit include scientific research, conversion of military facilities for civilian production and special subsidies to republican economies, the decree said.

The wording appeared to reflect Kremlin concern that republican leaders might interpret the decisions as an infringement of sovereignty and an attempt to return to the command-administrative methods of the past.

The central government is already at loggerheads with the giant Russian Federation over contributions to the 1991 Soviet budget. The dispute threatens to paralyse the economy.

Russia was said to slash its budget contribution to 23.4 billion roubles (\$41 billion at the official rate), 119 billion (\$212.5 billion) less than in 1990.

Finance Minister Valentin Pavlov told Soviet television the

new stabilisation fund would pave the way for market-oriented reforms by shielding unprofitable enterprises and people below the poverty line.

He said the measures to support loss-making enterprises would prevent unemployment that might result from businesses closing in competitive market conditions.

"We must prepare for the transition to a market...this will provide guarantees for people's welfare," he said.

The decree recommended that republics set up their own extra-budgetary funds. "All union republics have spoken in favour of such funds and introduction of a sales tax," Pavlov said.

The sales tax was set at five per cent and aimed at financing central and republican government projects, supporting poorer citizens and stabilising the economy.

Seventy per cent of the sales tax revenue will go to republican budgets and the remainder to

the federal budget.

The tax, to be levied on sales of consumer goods and services, will probably lead to price rises.

The tax would raise the 3-rouble price of a pack of Soviet cigarettes, for example, by 15 kopeks. However, it would amount to a huge increase for Soviets whose average monthly wage is only 257 roubles (\$411 at the official exchange rate).

The government already subsidises most industries and services. There was no way immediately to determine how much revenue the tax would generate.

The vaguely defined "non-budget stabilisation fund" is to be created from 20 per cent deductions from existing taxes and other payments, TASS said.

The decree said 20 per cent of revenues from the sales of state property would go to the fund, while the remaining 80 per cent would go to paying of "the state debt," TASS said.

U.S. textile makers cite record imports, job losses

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. textile makers have said that record imports of cloth and clothing and a sluggish domestic economy slowed the output of their mills in 1990, costing jobs and profits.

The American Textile Manufacturers Institute said textile shipments in 1990 fell by five per cent against 1989, after-tax profits fell 57 per cent, capital spending was down seven per cent and employment in mills was down three per cent.

Said institute president Donald Hughes: "It was a disappointing year not only because of our weak economic performance, but also because of our government's failure to come to grips with the textile and apparel import problem which is taking a heavy toll in terms of production, earnings and jobs."

Major exporters of textiles to the United States include China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea and the Philippines. The industry said in a statement that its aims in 1991 would include trying to limit the growth of textile imports into the country, as it had in past years.

Congress several times has passed legislation to increase quotas on foreign textiles, but they have all met presidential vetoes, the last on Oct. 5 by President George Bush, who said the bill was protectionist and would increase the cost of clothing.

Other institute aims for 1991 are continued support for the buy-American "crafted with pride in the USA" programme and improvements in worker productivity.

The institute said imports in 1990 rose by two per cent over 1989, while exports rose by 22 per cent.

An institute spokesman, Jim Morrissey, said that much of the export gain was due to a weak dollar as well as by material that was exported as textile and then cut and sewn abroad and returned as imported clothing.

Exports in 1990 were valued at \$7.3 billion, but imports were \$32.5 billion, for a trading deficit of \$25.2 billion.

Gulf Arab oil income tops \$70 b in '90 — GIB

BAHRAIN (R) — Oil revenues of Gulf Arab states other than Kuwait and Iraq jumped by more than a half during 1990 due to higher crude prices prompted by the Gulf crisis, a senior Gulf economist said in a report published Sunday.

Gulf International Bank (GIB) economist Henry Azzam said the combined oil income of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Oman and Bahrain rose 55 per cent to \$70.5 billion from \$44.9 billion in 1989.

Azzam predicted budget deficits of three of the five states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Qatar — would shrink in 1990 while deficits forecast by Oman and the UAE would turn into surpluses.

Saudi Arabia's oil revenues would jump 63 per cent to \$14.3 billion while UAE earnings would rise 43 per cent to \$14.8 billion and Qatar's by 50 per cent to \$3.4 billion.

Oman's oil income would also increase by 40 per cent to \$4.7 billion while Bahrain's would rise 33 per cent to \$875 million, he said.

Azzam said despite the jump in oil income, Saudi Arabia's 1990 deficit would not be wiped out because it was the main financial backer of the multinational forces in the area and frontline states hit by the U.N. embargo against Iraq.

He quoted Saudi Arabia's finance ministry as saying it had spent \$21 billion on the crisis, considerably more than its additional oil revenues of \$16 billion.

A significant portion of the incremental oil production was also either being supplied free of charge to the multinational forces or at concessional terms to Saudi allies, he said.

Saudi Arabia set 1990 spending at around \$38 billion and forecast a budget deficit of \$6.6 billion.

Azzam said that although Iraq's invasion of Kuwait had hurt non-oil economic activities of its GCC allies, solid overall growth during the first seven months of 1990 and the jump in oil exports resulted in increased GDP growth rates.

Saudi Arabia's GDP would grow by 9.8 per cent in 1990 compared with 3.5 per cent in 1989 while the UAE growth rate would leap to 25 per cent from 14.3, he said.

Barclays to acquire Europenne de Banque

PARIS (AP) — The French government has approved plans for Barclays Bank of Britain to acquire Europenne de Banque, a unit of Credit Commercial de France (CCF), for a total amount of 1.5 billion francs (\$300 million). CCF and Barclays said in a joint communique.

The British banking group will initially acquire 51 per cent of Europenne de Banque and will purchase the remaining 49 per cent early next year, the statement said.

A protocol agreement on the sale was reached earlier this month between the French privately owned bank and the French subsidiary of the Barclays Group.

Barclays already has a French presence through its French subsidiaries Barclays Bank S.A., Cie Financiers Barclays and its stockbrokerage Puget-Mahe S.A.

The acquisition will give Bar-

clays some prestigious real estate in central Paris, 16 branch offices throughout France and a financial distribution network through Europenne de Banque's subsidiary Lafitte Investissement, which has 24 offices and a direct sales force operating as financial consultants.

CCF put Europenne de Banque up for sale at the beginning of this year. It announced in May that it was in talks with National Westminster Banking Group of Britain, but negotiations were broken off two months ago.

Barclays, which has a weaker French presence than National Westminster, its main British competitor, then stepped in with its offer.

Europenne de Banque reported consolidated net profit for the first half of 1990 of 25 million francs (about \$5 million), down slightly from 28 million francs a year earlier.

Small Czech privatisation to commence in January

PRAGUE (AP) — The first round of auctions to privatise small shops and state-owned businesses is to begin next month, the state CKI news agency has reported.

The privatisation is part of the government's programme of economic reforms and is designed to turn over 30 private hands some 130,000 small shops and enterprises across the country.

The privatisation process is a key part of reforms aimed at transforming Czechoslovakia's centralised economy into a Western-style one guided by market mechanisms.

Thousands of vendors across the country staged symbolic strikes in September demanding they be given first crack at buying the shops and a chance to pay up to half the price in instalments spread over a seven year period.

However, the law approved by parliament in October excluded any provisions that would give preferential treatment to any potential buyer.

Auctions will be held in two rounds, with the first round open only to Czechoslovak citizens and those who left the country after 1948 when the communists came to power.

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AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Sunday, December 30, 1990
Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell		Buy	Sell
U.S. dollar	663.0	667.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	491.7	494.7
Pound Sterling	1278.1	1285.8	Dutch guilder	393.5	395.9
Deutschemark	444.4	447.1	Swedish crown	117.6	118.3
Swiss franc	520.9	524.0	Italian lira (for 100)	58.9	59.3
French franc	130.2	131.0	Belgian franc (for 10)	215.0	216.3

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LETHAL WEAPON

Show: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 634144

PHILADELPHIA

Sylvester Stallone

LOCK UP

Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

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Announces that it is holding a winter Spanish language course. The course which lasts for three months will start January 2, 1991.

Registration for the course starts on December 18, 1990. The course is for all levels.

Classes will be on: Saturdays, Mondays and Wednesdays.

For more information please call Tel. 624049, Jabel Amman, First Circle.

ANNOUNCEMENT

As originally planned, the American Community School will resume all classes (K-12) after Christmas break on January 9, 1991

استئناف
ستعود مدرسة الجالية الأمريكية لفتح ابوابها للتفصيل
الجديد بعد عطلة عيد الميلاد ورأس السنة لجميع الصفوف
اعتباراً من ٩ / ١ / ١٩٩١

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Please call 641818 from 9-10 and 2-5

Die Botschaft der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in Amman informiert:

An alle deutschen Staatsangehörigen in Jordanien

Die Deutsche Botschaft in Amman lädt alle Deutschen in Jordanien zu einem Informationsgespräch über die gegenwärtige Situation in der Region ein.

Ort: Marriott Hotel, Amman

Zeit: 7. Januar 1991, 10.00 Uhr

هكذا حذو الأصل

Poésie
ETOUFFEMENT

Je me demande bien des fois
Ce que je fais dans ce monde-là!
Mon âme qui flotte dans l'au-delà
Veut se libérer de mon corps las...

A tout ce qui m'entoure étrangère,
Remplie d'une douceur amère,
Je me laisse vivre et j'espère
Voir mon rêve réalisé sur Terre.

Mais où va donc notre monde?
Ce XXe siècle est une honte!
Où sont la Science et le Progrès?
Ils n'ont entraîné que le regret.

Êtres humains, arrêtez d'enfanter;
Vos enfants ne pourront pas chanter.
Ils vivront sur Terre tourmentés,
Vous accuserez de les avoir apportés
Pour satisfaire votre égoïsme, votre fierté.

Regardez donc autour de vous!
Les hommes ne se saluent plus,
Ils tendent des lames qui tuent.
Témoin de tant d'horreurs,
Le ciel a perdu sa couleur...
Du sang répandu sur Terre,
Il reflète une menace Lumière!

Jadis la Terre nourrie d'eau
Donnait ses fruits les plus beaux...
Aujourd'hui noyée de sang,
Elle vomit tous ses poisons.
Ses entrailles tremblent de dégoût
Les flammes jaillissent de partout...
Le ciel gronde de colère.
Les volcans éclatent en tonnerre!

Des gens meurent inondés
D'autres meurent assouffés
D'autres encore sont brûlés
De bien meurent affamés.
De fleurs le monde ne manque pas.
La mort est bien la fin ici-bas.
Êtres humains, arrêtez-les!
Seuls les phénomènes de la nature
Peuvent tuer les pauvres créatures.
Vous avez la sagesse et la pensée.
Hélas! vous les avez en armes transformées
Pour vous faire du mal et vous entre-tuer.

Notre séjour sur Terre est éphémère.
Essayez de vous en réjouir en paix.
Aimez, vénérez et nourrissez cette Terre
— Où nous reposons tous pour l'éternité —
D'amour, d'affection et de prière.

Vous qui ne croyez pas en Dieu,
Ne créez pas ici-bas un enfer!
Vous qui croyez en Dieu,
Ne vous réjouissez pas dans ses prières!
Criez, hurlez, faites quelque chose
Ne soyez pas tyran ou victime!
Pour l'amour de Dieu il faut qu'on ose
Arrêter le monde devant cet abîme.
Arrêtez, arrêtez votre course mes frères,
Demain il sera peut-être trop tard!
Vous vous êtes lancés les yeux bandés,
Vous avez perdu vos fins espérances.
Otez ce masque laid que vous portez,
Ouvrez bien les yeux et regardez,
Laissez votre égoïsme de côté,
Pensez à l'avenir, à la beauté,
Il y a autre chose que ces futilités
Derrière lesquelles vous haletiez!
Le pouvoir, la puissance, l'argent
Ne sont en fait que des démons
Qui vous conduisent au Néant!

Amour, tendresse, affection,
Amour, pitié, compassion,
Charité, gratitude, dévotion,
Où sont tous ces beaux sentiments?
Ou sont-ils simplement des illusions,
Auxquelles on rêve tout secrètement?

Mon cœur brisé tombe en morceaux.
Croire aux sentiments, c'est bien sot!
Ce ne sont plus que des mots,
Qu'on n'ose plus prononcer tout haut!

Mes piquants de hérissos ont repoussé.
Dans ma coquille recroquevillée,
Derrière ma délicate carapace,
Je fuis ce monde "dégueulasse"!

C'est lâche, je le sais bien,
Mais je me sens si seule enfin!
Vous qui souffrez de mon mal,
Unissez votre voix à la mienne.
Crions, hurlons à toutes persiennes:
«Frères humains, rendez-nous notre Humanité!
A la Sagesse, à la Raison, revenez»

Suzdel Takrouiri
Professeur de Français
à l'Université du Yarmouk

«Premier musée privé de France»

La maison d'Emile Zola à Médan

«Nulla dies sine linea» (Pas un jour sans une ligne)... En lettres noires dans un cartouche doré se détache, sur le manteau de la cheminée, la devise à laquelle Emile Zola est demeuré fidèle jusqu'à son dernier jour. Nous sommes dans son cabinet de travail, à Médan. Une pièce vaste comme un atelier de sculpteur ouvrant, par une large baie, sur la vallée.

1878. Zola vient de publier «L'assommoir». Pour échapper à la célébrité, il cherche un lieu où poursuivre, dans la quiétude, son œuvre monumentale: «Les Rougon-Macquart, histoire naturelle et sociale d'une famille sous le second Empire». Il trouve le havre souhaité à une trentaine de kilomètres à l'ouest de Paris, à Médan, dans un paysage digne des canotiers des bords de Seine, chers à Renoir et à Monet.

«J'ai acheté une maison, une cabane à lapins dans un trou charmant (...). La littérature a payé ce modeste asile champêtre», écrit-il à Flaubert.

Alors l'écrivain s'improvise architecte, bâtisseur, décorateur. Il flanque la maison d'une tour carrée dans laquelle il installe sa chambre et son cabinet de travail. A l'intention de ses amis, il fait construire un pavillon de quatre chambres dans le jardin. Contre le potager, il installe une ferme avec une écurie pour le cheval «Bonhomme», une étable pour la vache et son veau, une laiterie, un poulailler, une immense serre pour ses fleurs.

Plus tard, il achète, juste en face sur le fleuve, une île que l'on gagne à bord de la barque «Nana». Il y installe un chalet, le «Paradou», y donne des parties champêtres. Par 24 achats successifs à l'entour, le «modeste

asile champêtre» devient un domaine cossu de 42.000 km².

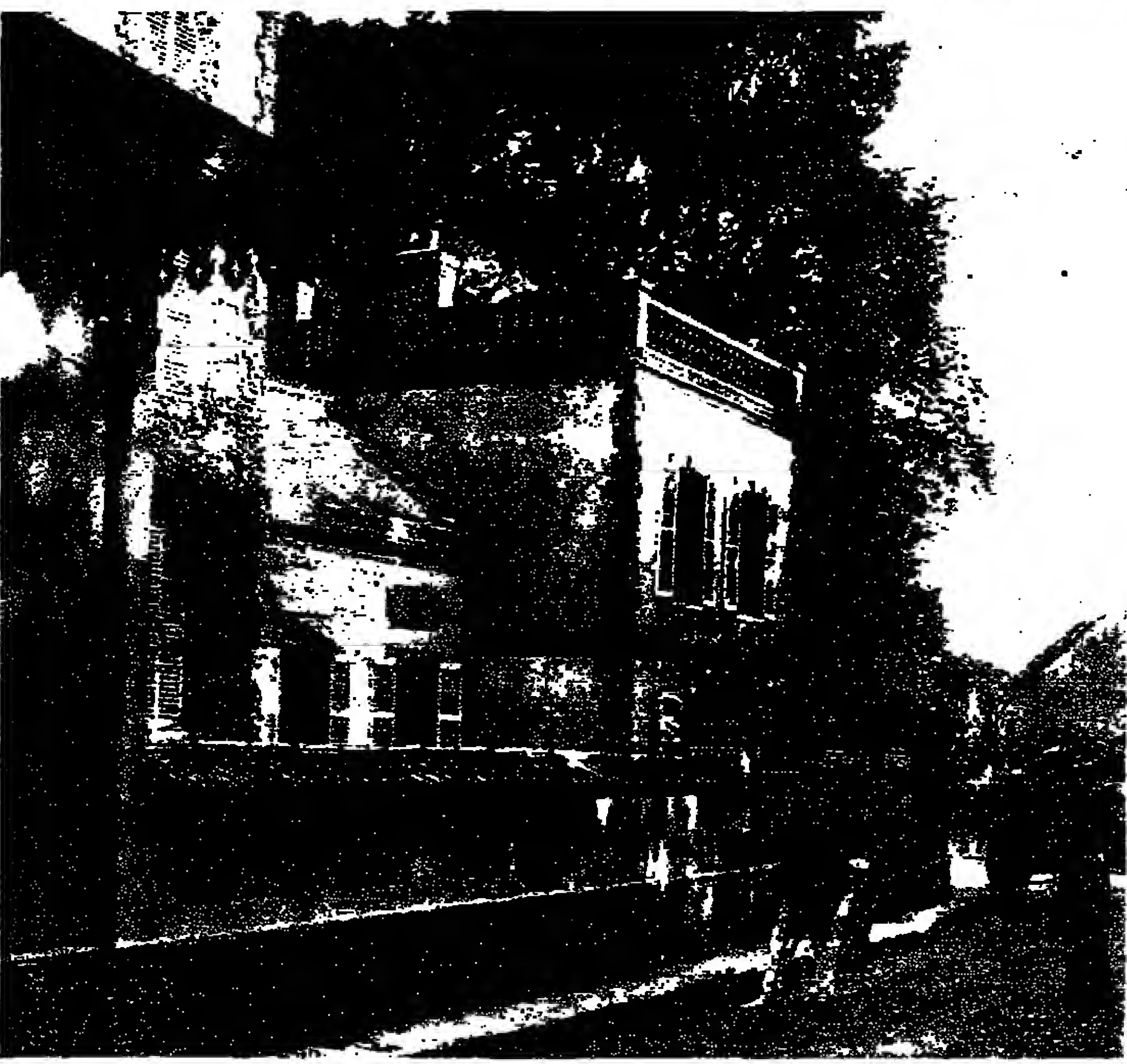
Zola préside à la décoration de la maison: mosaïque dans la salle de billard, vitraux anciens dans la salle à manger, chapiteaux historiés, rétables, lanternes... L'œuvre romanesque et la maison grandissent au même rythme, l'argent que rapporte la première servant à développer, embellir la seconde.

Dans la salle à manger prend corps, autour du maître, le projet des «Soirées de Médan», l'œuvre collective par laquelle de jeunes écrivains, dont Maupassant et Huysmans, rendent hommage au chef de file du naturalisme. A Médan, Zola s'éprend de la jolie Jeanne Rozerot, la lingère de sa femme, de 27 ans plus jeune que lui.

Commence alors une nouvelle vie illuminée par l'amour. Il apprend la photographie, l'une de ses passions. Aux beaux jours, l'écrivain enfourche son vélo-cyclo et s'en va, un appareil en bandoulière, tirer des clichés dans la campagne environnante. En sept ans, il impressionnera 7.000 plaques.

Zola est heureux dans cette maison de Médan, fruit d'une fortune acquise par un labeur acharné. Elle symbolise sa réussite dans le monde des Lettres. «Je passe de délicieuses après-midi dans mon jardin, à regarder tout vivre autour de moi. Avec l'âge, je sens tout s'en aller et j'aime tout passionnément», écrit-il à un ami au cours de l'été 1902. Deux mois plus tard - il a 62 ans - l'auteur de «Germinal» quitte Médan pour regagner son appartement de la rue de Bruxelles à Paris. Le 29 septembre au matin, on le retrouve asphyxié par les émanations de la cheminée.

Camille Hérisson



La maison de Médan.

Trois ans après la disparition du romancier, sa femme Alexandrine, fit don de la maison de Médan à l'Assistance publique. On y installa une pouponnière, puis une école d'infirmières. Mais chaque année, le premier dimanche d'octobre, les descendants et fidèles du romancier y organisent un pèlerinage autour de personnalités illustres.

Ainsi naquit, en 1985, une «Association du musée Zola». Elle a rassemblé des collections évoquant le souvenir de l'écrivain. Dons de particuliers ou produits de subventions d'organismes publics pour l'essentiel. Une quarantaine de bénévoles entretiennent la maison et guident, chaque dimanche à la belle saison, les milliers de visiteurs — dont de nombreux étrangers. (L'œuvre d'Emile Zola a été traduite en 17 langues.)

Ceux-ci s'attardent surtout dans la chambre de l'écrivain où ont été rassemblés les documents qui évoquent son rôle dans l'affaire Dreyfus. De l'arrestation du capitaine et sa déportation à l'île du Diable, jusqu'à sa réhabilitation, en passant par la célèbre publication du célèbre «J'accuse», signé Emile Zola, paru dans l'«Aurore» du 13 janvier 1898.

En 1989, le «Sunday Times» a classé la maison de Zola «premier musée privé de France» pour la qualité de son accueil et l'intérêt de ses collections. Un hommage qui a stimulé le zèle des conservateurs: cet automne, il ont célébré le centenaire de la publication de «La bête humaine» en organisant, à Médan, une exposition de documents consacrés aux machines à vapeur de la fin du XIX^e siècle.

A L'AFFICHE

FOCUS

Jazz

Phrases longues et courtes

Consacré aux sons et aux images du Jazz, le mois de janvier au Centre Américain nous livre deux excellents films, *The Cotton Club* (fiction) et *Bird* (biographie de Charlie Parker) sycopés de trois improvisations collectives, *Live at the Village Vanguard* (documentaire en trois parties) qui ont eu lieu en 1984 au célèbre Jazz-club de Greenwich Village, à New-York, le Vanguard.

Le programme débute malgré tout sur un ton léger (le jeudi 3), avec un film de fiction ayant pour cadre le Newport Jazz Festival, sur la côte ouest des Etats-Unis. *High Society* (1957) est une comédie musicale racontant l'histoire d'une foule de prétendants et de la fille de la haute, têtue et arrogante, qu'ils convoitent. Ce divertissement fade est corsé par les airs allégres et les paroles intelligentes de son compositeur, Cole Porter. L'intérêt est ici le numéro de Jazz offert par le trompettiste Louis Armstrong et sa troupe les All Stars — une démonstration expliquant les instruments que les jazzmen emploient et la façon dont ils se coordonnent. Ce *Now You Has Jazz* est de pur style New-Orléans, ce son particulier remontant à la genèse du phénomène musical. Le Jazz prit naissance au début du XX^e siècle et Louis Armstrong — enfant du temps et du lieu — fut pendant toute sa carrière l'interprète extraordinaire de ce style classique.

Moins célèbre (peut-être) que le légendaire Armstrong, et d'une autre période, le trompettiste Freddie Hubbard, qui apparaît dans la série *Live at the Village Vanguard* (le mercredi 9), s'inscrit dans un autre style de Jazz, rendu célèbre à la fin des années 1940: le be-bop. Cette série nous met en présence aussi de Woody Shaw, disciple de Hubbard et — tout comme lui — touché par les courants des années 1950, le freejazz, et celui des années 1960, le jazz-rock-fusion. Vedette de la décennie 1970, il jouera du néo-bop dans la seconde partie de *Live at the Village Vanguard* (le mercredi 16) avec le Mal Waldron Quintet, composé d'associés des pères du be-bop. Mal Waldron (piano) et Charles Rouse ont tous deux joué avec Charlie Parker et Thelonious Monk.

La troisième partie de la série (le mercredi 30), complétant le festival, nous présente le travail de Lee Konitz, le saxo qui échappa à l'influence du be-bop. Aux phrases courtes et rapides du style de ses contemporains Monk (piano), Parker (saxo) et Dizzie Gillespie (trompette), Konitz a préféré les leçons de son maître Lennie Tristano. Il s'associa au style des phrases longues sans inflexion, caractérisées par la finesse de la construction plutôt que par les complexités harmoniques saccadées du be-bop.

Des trois documentaires — chacun d'une durée d'une demi-heure — le plus riche du point de vue association d'image et de son est celui du Mal Waldron Quintet (le mercredi 16). Bruce Buschel — réalisateur-producteur de la série — a réussi à inscrire la caméra dans le jeu de l'ensemble avec brio. Il crée des images qui nous communiquent la qualité subjective d'une interprétation basée sur l'improvisation et l'intensité de cette expérience pour le jazzman. Un très beau moment nous révèle l'association de l'instrument et du joueur: Les doigts du bassiste Reggie Workman, solo, pinçant les cordes comme une araignée avançant sur sa toile. D'autres images rassemblent les musiciens, mettant en évidence leur écoute intense, dans l'attente du moment idéal pour replonger.

Intensité est le mot qui décrit le mieux *The Cotton Club* (1984) de Francis Ford Coppola, présenté le jeudi 10. C'est une évocation de la fameuse boîte de nuit de Harlem dans les années 1920-1930 à New-York, où beaucoup de réputations de Jazz — comme au Vanguard — furent établies. Il en va de même pour l'exposition de la vie tourmentée de Charlie Parker, que Clint Eastwood a entreprise dans *Bird* (1988), présenté le jeudi 17. Riches en images, les deux films, tissent sur la bande son une trame qui montre comment les destins d'un éventail de personnages (danseurs et musiciens, propriétaires de clubs et gangsters) étaient impliqués dans cette évolution dévorante du son, cet ogre qu'on appelle le Jazz.

Sami Kamal

TELEVISION

DIMANCHE

17h30 - «Dorothée». Film. L'histoire d'une jeune fille, à la recherche d'un trésor.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Carnet de notes. Extraits de musique classique.

LUNDI

18h00 - L'Oiseau des mers. Dessin animé.
18h10 - Denver le dernier dinosaure. Dessin animé.
18h35 - Aventure Voyage. Magazine de l'aventure.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Magazine sportif hebdomadaire.

MARDI

18h00 - «Denver le dernier dinosaure», dessin animé.
18h30 - Santé Vision. Magazine médical.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - «Aujourd'hui en Jordanie». Magazine local préparé et présenté par Saleh Madi.

MERCREDI

18h00 - Thalassa. Le magazine de la mer.
18h30 - «Sixième gauche». Premier épisode d'une série de 50 qui raconte la cohabitation, dans le même immeuble, d'une famille de Français d'origine algérienne et d'une famille franco-française. Loin du misérabilisme, l'objectif des réalisateurs de cette série est de traiter avec humour de ce thème souvent porté à l'écran sous forme de fiction.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Carnet de notes. Extraits de musique classique.

JEUDI

18h00 - «Snorky». Dessin animé.
18h30 - Splendeur sauvage. Documentaire sur la vie des animaux.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Reportage d'actualité.

VENREDI

18h00 - «Pour tout l'or du Transval». Premier épisode d'une série de six qui raconte la lutte qui opposa les soldats britanniques aux fermiers hollandais au début de ce siècle en Afrique australe.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Histoire de l'art. Série documentaire.

SAMEDI

18h00 - «Destination Santé». Magazine médical, consacré cette semaine au cancer.
19h00 - Le Journal.
19h15 - Carnet de notes. Extraits de musique classique.

CINEMA

Jazz. Dans le cadre de son cycle consacré au Jazz, le Centre Américain présente cette semaine «High Society», comédie musicale de Cole Porter, avec le grand Louis Armstrong, Grace Kelly et Bing Crosby. (Voir FOCUS).
Centre Américain, le jeudi 3 janvier 1991 à 19h.

Quelle histoire!

Boris en Terre Promise

Boris était né dans une banlieue sale de Moscou. Il était fils unique d'un couple d'employés du gouvernement. L'appartement familial, situé au cinquième étage d'un grand immeuble sans ascenseur, ne comportait que deux pièces, une toute petite cuisine et une minuscule salle d'eau.

L'une des pièces était la chambre à coucher. Elle contenait deux lits, une armoire double et une commode. Dans l'un des lits, pouvant à peine contenir une personne, dormaient ses parents. Le deuxième, celui de Boris, était tellement étroit qu'il en était souvent tombé en se retournant quand il était tout jeune. En grandissant, il avait appris à dormir sans se retourner, le visage toujours tourné vers le mur. Il put ainsi à la fois éviter les chutes douloureuses et laisser une certaine intimité à ses parents, qui n'en profitaient d'ailleurs que de moins en moins.

La deuxième pièce, baptisée pompeusement «salon», comprenait deux fauteuils, une petite table, six chaises, un poêle à charbon et une bibliothèque dans laquelle s'entassaient de nombreux livres, auxquels vint s'ajouter un petit poste de radio et, plus tard, un petit poste de télé en noir et blanc.

Boris voyait assez peu ses parents. Dès son plus jeune âge, sa mère le déposait le matin dans une crèche pour ne le reprendre que le soir. Plus tard, l'autocar de l'école le prenait de bon matin, avant même que ses parents n'aient quitté pour leur travail. Lorsque l'autocar le ramenait le soir, il retrouvait ses parents déjà rentrés. Le temps de dîner, de se laver et de regarder un peu la télévision, le moment de se coucher arrivait. Ses jours de congé, il les passait à s'entraîner au karaté dans un club pas très éloigné de sa maison, un sport dans lequel il excellait et qui lui rapporta plusieurs médailles.

A l'école, Boris fit la connaissance d'une fille de son âge du nom de Sarah. Elle aussi était fille unique, mais de parents juifs,

considérés par la communauté comme plus ou moins dissidents. Sarah était jolie, douce et bien moins égoïste que les autres camarades de Boris. Une fois qu'il avait oublié son plumier, il ne trouva que Sarah pour lui prêter un crayon.

Une solide amitié naquit ainsi entre Boris et Sarah. Il trouvait en elle la sœur affectueuse que ses parents ne lui avaient jamais donné et elle trouvait en lui le frère sur lequel elle pouvait toujours compter.

La vie suivait son cours monotone et fastidieux. Soudain, la Perestroïka commença. Boris était alors adolescent et commençait à se poser des questions sur le sens de la vie. Il éprouvait un besoin urgent de changement. Pourquoi ne pas émigrer, aller aux Etats-Unis par exemple où la vie paraissait si excitante?

Sarah l'informa que l'émigration pour Israël devenait possible. Tout ce qu'il fallait faire, c'était présenter une demande à une agence juive qui se chargerait par la suite de toutes les formalités. «Mais je ne suis pas juif», objecta Boris. «Aucune importance», répondit Sarah. L'essentiel est que tu veuilles vraiment t'établir en Israël!

Boris ne savait pas grand-chose sur Israël. D'après les bribes d'informations qu'il voyait à la télévision, il s'était formé l'impression que cet Etat avait usurpé la terre et les droits des Palestiniens. «Propagande soviétique!», lui affirma Sarah, qui lui remit de nombreuses brochures en couleurs dans lesquelles Israël était décrit comme le pays du soleil, de la Liberté et de la Tradition. «Pourquoi pas Israël?», finit-il par décider. L'important est de sortir d'ici! En Israël au moins je serai libre et je ne crèverai pas de froid en hiver!

A l'insu de ses parents, Boris présenta donc, début 1987, sa demande d'immigration. A l'automne de la même année, il fut, avec Sarah, admis à l'Université. Tous deux choisirent d'étudier

l'hébreu et les langues orientales. Avec Sarah, il assistait le soir, au «foyer israélien», à des cours d'initiation à la religion hébraïque. Il les trouvait bien plus intéressants que les cours de marxisme-léninisme qu'il avait dû suivre durant les différentes périodes de son enseignement.

Entre-temps, la vie à la maison devenait de plus en plus pénible. Les salaires réunis de ses parents, auxquels venait s'ajouter la petite subvention qu'il recevait lui-même en tant qu'étudiant, devenaient à peine suffisants pour subsister. Les rations de viande, de café, de thé et de sucre diminuaient de jour en jour. Les légumes et les fruits devenaient hors de prix. Même le père de Boris, qui avait l'habitude de prendre deux verres de Vodka le soir, avait dû diminuer sa ration de moitié (non sans regret).

Vers le début de l'été 1990, le visa tant attendu arriva enfin; Boris entra un soir à la maison et annonça triomphalement à ses parents: «Je pars en Israël!»

Ses parents tombèrent des nues. «Mais qu'as-tu à faire avec Israël?», finit par demander son père.

«Je m'en vais, c'est tout! Ce sera toujours mieux qu'ici!», répondit-il.

«Et ton pays qui t'a tout donné, et nous autres?», plaïda sa mère en sanglotant.

«Je ne dois à ce pays que la misère et les privations! Quant à vous autres je vous inviterai à venir dans ma nouvelle patrie. Patientez quelques mois seulement, le temps que je devienne riche.»

Vers la mi-juillet, Boris, ainsi que Sarah et ses parents, se retrouvèrent dans l'avion les amenant à Varsovie. Là ils prirent un avion d'El-Al et atterrirent à l'aéroport Ben Gourion, au cœur même de la Terre Promise.

Sabri Farah

(A suivre)

Prices said to increase in Hungary next month

BUDAPEST (AP) — The price of bakery products, sugar, flour, rice, cosmetics and other household products will go up on Jan. 2, a newspaper reported Friday.

According to the Budapest daily Nepszabadsag, bread and other bakery goods would rise by 30 per cent, management officials at food trading companies said.

The paper said prices would rise for the other listed products but did not specify by how much because, under new regulations, wholesalers can only suggest retail prices.

Final prices will be determined by market conditions, the paper said.

The state railroads have announced that domestic fares would increase by 80 per cent and the national telephone company is planning a 150 per cent hike in phone charges.

Postal services are going up by 40 per cent and municipal bus fares by 55 per cent early next year.

The increases are necessary to offset dwindling state subsidies, slashed by the government as it tries to pass through parliament a 1991 budget projecting a 78 billion forint (\$1.3 billion) deficit. The austerity measures are a precondition for credit from the International Monetary Fund.

Price rises, falling output put Bulgaria in a crisis

SOFIA (AP) — Prices on basic foods, consumer items and services have risen dramatically since May while overall output has dropped, leading the state news agency BTA to declare the country in an "emergency situation."

Prices were 46.9 per cent higher on average in November than in May, according to a report by the Central Statistics Office.

Food price increases averaged 30.4 per cent on average and prices on other goods rose an average of 54.4 per cent. Services went up 21.9 per cent, while rents and taxi fares doubled.

But stores remain barren of many staples despite the spiraling prices and rationing.

Overall production in the country is expected to drop by 15-17 per cent for the year, BTA said.

Yugoslavia devalues dinar, faces key year in 1991

BELGRADE (R) — Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic Friday announced a 22.2 per cent devaluation of the dinar against the Deutschmark to try to save the country from economic collapse.

Markovic, unveiling his government's policies for the coming year, told parliament that 1991 would decide whether Yugoslavia would survive or disintegrate, because of economic crisis and political and ethnic rivalries among its six republics.

"The coming year is key, not only for the success or failure of reform but for the survival of Yugoslavia," Markovic said.

Markovic said the government had agreed to fix the exchange rate at nine dinars to one mark after keeping it at seven dinars since last Jan. 1.

He said the decision would come into force Jan. 1.

The devaluation would give exports a boost that would outweigh any surge of inflation it caused, Markovic said.

Yugoslav and Western economists had estimated that the dinar was up to 80 per cent overvalued. Yugoslav exporters said they were being crippled by the 7:1 exchange rate.

Yugoslavia has been drifting into political and economic chaos since the death in 1980 of communist ruler Josip Broz Tito after 35 years in power.

The decline accelerated this year as free elections ended 45 years of communist rule in four of the country's six republics and increased political divisions in the multi-ethnic federation.

Rows between the rival republics have deepened the economic crisis by blocking Western-style reforms launched by Markovic at the start of 1990 and discouraging foreign investors.

Foreign debts total \$19 billion, industrial output is falling and annual inflation is approaching 120 per cent. The foreign trade deficit is more than \$4 billion.

He called for wage cuts at loss-making firms, large cuts in public spending and held out the hope that annual inflation would be restricted to 30 to 40 per cent in 1991.

He demanded a long-stalled overhaul of the banking system and ordered republics demanding more independence of federal laws to stop withholding payments into government funds.

FAO appeals for urgent action to avert famine across Africa

NAIROBI (R) — The United Nations issued an urgent appeal Friday for food aid to avert a massive famine drought on war and drought across Africa.

A report by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) warned that food aid needs for 1991 were expected to increase sharply at a time when global supplies were in decline and Africa faced severe balance of payments difficulties.

The report said two successive years of drought had caused crop failures in countries bordering the Sahel from Mauritania in the west to Ethiopia in the east.

"Of most concern is the rapidly deteriorating situation in Sudan and the continuing food emergency in northern Ethiopia," it said.

It warned that widespread loss of life would be inevitable in parts of these countries unless nearly two million tonnes of food aid arrived next year.

"Only early action will avert food shortages and widespread suffering in 1991," it said.

Starvation caused by drought and civil wars in Ethiopia and Sudan killed an estimated 1.7 million people in the 1980s.

External food aid and logistical support will also be needed in several Sahelian countries in West Africa, where cereal harvests declined from 7.95 million tonnes to 7.5 million tonnes over the last year.

The report urged support for speedy deliveries of food to populations starving as a result of displacement by wars in several countries, particularly Angola, Liberia and Mozambique.

The 10-month-old civil war in Liberia has caused the displacement of 850,000 people who now rely on food aid to survive.

An estimated 110,000 tonnes of food are required for a U.N. programme in Angola to run truck convoys through "peace corridors" to reach 1.9 million drought-stricken people.

Almost two million refugees returning home to Mozambique face serious food shortages, but only about 50 per cent of the 600,000 tonnes of food pledged by donors for 1990/91 has so far arrived.

The shortfall reflects what the report argues may be a sign that worries over food shortages in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe will divert assistance away from African countries.

"We appeal to the developed countries not to let domestic economic constraints and concern for the problems of eastern Europe divert their attention from the food needs of millions of Africans," FAO Director-General Edouard Saouma said.

Only 2.7 million tonnes of food aid were delivered to sub-Saharan Africa in 1989/90, compared with the 3.9 million tonnes pledged by donors.

But the FAO's early warning system indicated a sharp increase in food aid requirements in 1990/91 compared with levels in the previous year.

CAIRO (R) — Economy Minister Youssef Mustapha was reported Saturday as saying Egypt would start in mid-January gradually to float the pound — a key demand by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In an early edition of the influential Al Gomhouriya newspaper, Mustapha also said foreign exchange offices would be allowed to operate legally alongside banks.

The newspaper reported: "Dr. Youssef Mustapha stated that the application of procedures to float the Egyptian pound gradually will be from the middle of next month."

Egypt cracked down on illegal currency traders this month after the dollar hit record highs because of shortages triggered by Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait.

The government also banned the 16 legal foreign exchange offices in the free zone city of Port Said from dealing in dollars from Dec. 10.

Al Gomhouriya said Egypt's central bank had set a minimum interest rate of 12 per cent on three-month deposits in Egyptian pounds, while leaving banks free to set their own ceilings.

It also said the central bank agreed to scrap a loan interest rate ceiling — apparently in agreement with IMF demands. Economists said this month the IMF had toughened its stand and demanded Egypt scrap a ceiling it had proposed on the interest rate banks could charge borrowers.

Egypt originally proposed in October a ceiling of 22 per cent, and later suggested 24 per cent, but the IMF had argued any ceiling was pointless, the economists said.

Falling U.S. economic index signals deepening recession

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. government's main gauge for predicting the economy's course fell for a fifth straight month in November, the Commerce Department said Friday, adding to evidence that America is slipping deeper into recession.

Economists said the steep 1.2 per cent drop in the November index of leading indicators suggests no quick end to the slowdown and that lower interest rates are needed to stimulate business activity.

"I don't trust leading indicators by itself but it is confirming evidence of what we are seeing everywhere in the economy, which is that things are going downhill in a hurry," said David Wyss, senior vice-president of DRI/McGraw Hill Inc. in Lexington, Massachusetts.

Thursday, the department said orders for long-lasting dur-

able goods like cars and refrigerators plunged 10.5 per cent in November, matching a record in January when orders tumbled at the sharpest rate in 32 years, since records were started.

Orders are one component of the broad-based leading indicators index, which has been skidding steadily since July.

The November decline followed a revised fall of 1.3 per cent in October and 0.8 per cent in September. A string of three or more drops in the basket of economic indicators is considered a reliable predictor of a shrinking economy.

"As far as the economy is concerned, there's no reason for optimism," said David McCarthy, managing director at Stone and McCarthy Research Associates Inc. in New York.

"There's nothing you can point at that would suggest the bottom is near," McCarthy added.

Wyss said it was troubling that major commercial banks have not lowered prime lending rates in response to the Federal Reserve (Fed) board's half percentage point cut on Dec. 19 in its trend-setting discount rate to 6.5 per cent.

Lower prime rates are likely early in January, Wyss said, but it may not be enough to reinvigorate consumer confidence and boost corporate willingness to spend and invest.

"I think the Fed is going to have to lower interest rates more than they have to encourage more private-sector activity," Wyss said. He expects a move as early as next week with a lowering of the federal funds rate on overnight loans to 6.75 per cent.

The decline last month in leading indicators, which are intended to reveal the direction of the economy in six to nine months' time, was broad-based and sharp. It exceeded Wall Street economists' expectations of a 0.6 per cent decline.

Eight of 11 indicators in the index fell in November, led by weaker orders for consumer goods, lower commodity prices, smaller order backlog, fewer plant and equipment orders, more unemployment insurance claims, a shorter work week, a smaller money supply.

Three indicators were positive: Higher stock prices, slower vendor deliveries and improved consumer expectations.

Financial markets suffered under a drumbeat of bad economic news this week, and Friday the dollar's value and government bond prices weakened. Stock prices were also weaker after the report on leading indicators was published.

Egypt said to commence floating pound next month

CAIRO (R) — Economy Minister Youssef Mustapha was reported Saturday as saying Egypt would start in mid-January gradually to float the pound — a key demand by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

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Egypt originally proposed in October a ceiling of 22 per cent, and later suggested 24 per cent, but the IMF had argued any ceiling was pointless, the economists said.

Japanese cabinet approves 70.35 trillion yen budget

TOKYO (AP) — The cabinet Saturday approved a proposed budget of 70.35 trillion yen (\$521.1 billion) for fiscal 1991 that emphasises increased spending on foreign aid and public works.

The growth rate in defence spending would be the lowest in three years, with the plan emphasising military logistics improvement over weaponry to reflect the relaxation of cold war tensions.

Finance Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto described the national spending plan as "a daily life-oriented" budget, designed to improve the quality of national life, a reference to projects such as sewers, airports and roads.

Under the proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning April 1, which still must be approved by parliament, spending would rise 6.2 per cent. The plan is based on a government forecast that economic growth will slow to 3.8 per cent from 5.2 per cent this fiscal year.

Public works spending would rise six per cent to 6.59 trillion yen (\$48.8 billion), reflecting pressure from the United States for Japan to spend more money on infrastructure projects at home in a bid to reduce the stubborn bilateral trade imbalance.

Last minute lobbying by the foreign ministry won a proposed increase in foreign aid of eight per cent to 883.1 billion yen (\$6.54 billion).

Newspapers reported that the foreign ministry argued that the finance ministry's original proposal of a 5.8 per cent foreign aid increase would not meet world expectations for international assistance from Japan, which has the second largest economy after the United States.

The Kyoto News Service said the proposal would reconfirm Japan's position as the world's largest donor of overseas development.

The draft budget plan calls for 4.39 trillion yen (\$32.5 billion) on defence, a rise of nearly 5.5 per cent, which would be slightly less than one per cent of gross national product, (GNP).

A finance ministry statement on the budget described the country's fiscal situation as "grim."

The government expects a drop in the growth of tax revenues to 6.5 per cent from 13.7 per cent in fiscal 1990.

Romania plans \$1b budget deficit for '91

BUCHAREST (R) — Romania's reforming government announced plans Friday for a \$1 billion budget deficit in 1991, after a year of turbulence following the overthrow of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu last December.

Finance Minister Theodor Stolojan told reporters the first budget to be submitted to parliament would be for 1991, which would show a deficit of 37 billion lei (\$1.05 billion).

The shortfall, equivalent to almost two per cent of gross national product, assumes that output, which fell sharply in 1990, will not only be maintained in the coming year but even grow by one per cent.

"This is an optimistic hypothesis and we expect the budget to be in for a very heated debate," Stolojan said.

The deficit reflects falling production and plummeting exports as Romania ends its first year of economic restructuring since it embarked on the painful transition to a market economy after last year's revolution.

It also reflects the disintegration of trade with other countries in the former communist Comecon trade bloc, which will start trading in hard currency next year instead of using a barter system denominated in roubles.

Stolojan said the government aimed to seek private investment wherever possible.

"It is all a matter of replacing state investments with private ones," he said.

Romania has also been hit by the Gulf crisis, which pushed up oil prices and cut off trade with Iraq, which had been selling its \$1.7 billion debt to Romania with crude oil.

Venezuelan economy recovers

CARACAS (R) — Venezuela's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 4.4 per cent this year, a sign of recovery two years into the government's economic reform programme, central bank president Pedro Tinoco said Friday.

The 4.4 per cent increase in GDP came after last year's 8.3 per cent contraction. GDP measures the total value of a nation's goods and services, minus the effects of trade.

The nation's oil sector grew by 8.5 per cent while the non-petroleum sector expanded by 3.8 per cent, and inflation dropped to 36.5 per cent, after a record 81 per cent in 1989, Tinoco told reporters at a news conference.

But unemployment for the year reached 10 per cent, a 0.4 per cent increase over the 1989 rate, he said.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES			
Saturday, December 29, 1990 Central Bank official rates			
	Buy	Sell	
U.S. dollar	663.0	667.0	
Pound Sterling	1278.1	1285.8	
Deutschmark	443.9	446.6	
Swiss franc	520.6	522.7	
French franc	130.2	131.0	
Japanese yen (for 100)	491.7	494.7	
Dutch guilder	395.3	395.9	
Swedish crown	117.6	118.3	
Italian lira (for 100)	58.9	59.3	
Belgian franc (for 10)	215.0	216.3	

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Cinema **NIJOM** Tel: 675571

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Cinema **PLAZA** Tel: 699238

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Show: 12:30, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15, 9:45 p.m.

Colombia presses banks

BOGOTA (R) — The Colombian government said Friday it was deferring for 90 days repayments on its \$6 billion debt with foreign commercial banks.

A statement from the monetary council, which sets monetary policy, said the government would defer for 90 days payments on public debt due to banks between Jan. 1 and March 28.

Local news reports said the decision would affect about \$200 million of repayments.

Officials said the government had taken the decision at the request of foreign banks drawing up a new four-year financing package for the government of President Cesar Gaviria.

They said the big foreign banks wanted the step to pressure smaller banks, which might drag their heels, into joining the new financing package which will run from 1991 to 1994.

"It's like saying I won't pay you unless you cooperate with the next loan," one official, who asked not to be identified, said. "It's nothing to get alarmed about."

Colombia announced last month it had reached agreement in principle on a new \$1.775 billion financing agreement with a 15-bank advisory committee led by the U.S. Chemical Bank Corp.

The official said the deferral would only affect commercial bank debt.

Colombia has a total foreign debt of \$16.2 billion. It is the only Latin American nation not to have rescheduled its foreign debt during the debt crisis of the 1980s.

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